SOCIO-POLITICAL STRUCTURE OF GUJARAT IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Ph.D Thesis in History

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By

Rashmi R. Batchu

Under the Guidance of

Prof. S. Hasan Mahmud

Department of History

Faculty of Arts

The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda

Vadodara-390 002

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JAMIA MILLIA ISLAMIA

NEW DELHI

INDIA

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the Ph.D. thesis entitled "Socio-Political Structure of Gujarat in the Eighteenth Century" submitted by Ms. Rashmi Batchu is her original work and has been carried out under my guidance and supervision and that this work has not been submitted anywhere for any degree.

(Rashmi Batchu)
Ph.D. Student

(S. Hasan Mahmud)
Professor of History
Director & Guide

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The 18th Century is considered to be a turning point in Indian History. The death of Aurangzeb in 1707 not only ended the hegemony of the centralized Mughal Empire in the sub-continent but also what is called the 'old order'. Important changes took place in many spheres. These aspects have been well researched in the recent years. In case of Gujarat in the course of the century the political scenario changed from the centralized, hierarchical and vertical structure to a decentralized, horizontal one. In this newly emerging structure various principalities emerged which were situated equally in terms of resources and sources of legitimacy and were constantly vying for greater power as well as resources. These principalities largely could not consolidate their gains. This in turn provided scope for the involvement of non-political people to take a share in the actual power in these places leading to an augmentation of their resources.

The region of Gujarat was one of the sixteen Subahs of the Mughal Empire. Situated on the western part of the subcontinent Gujarat was an emporium of overseas trade of India with Red Sea, Africa and from thence to Europe. The geographical contours of the region began to take shape since around the 13th Century. Under the Rajput rulers of Anhilwad-Patan a semblance of a centralized Political power came to be established. It was strengthened to a greater extent during the rule of Gujarat Sultans. 13th to 15th Centuries also

contributed towards the identity formation and the development of the regional language as distinct from the Marwad in the North and Malwa in the East of Gujarat and Deccan in the South. Different parts of the region in earlier times were known by different names like Anarta, Latha, and etc. By 15th Century however the name Gujarat referring to the whole region came into being. Thus when Gujarat passed into Mughal control it had become a compact distinct region which was fostered by the Mughals. The present day Gujarat largely corresponds with Mughal Subah Gujarat. The region composed of three sub-regions having distinct micro cultures viz., Main land Gujarat further divided into South, Central and North Gujarat for the sake of convenience; Saurashtra and Kutch. It was always attempted by the rulers operating from the mainland to assert their control over the other two sub-regions. They were successful in varying degrees in establishing control over Saurashtra but Kutch only tacitly acknowledged the suzerainty of the rulers from mainland, be it the Waghelas, Solankis, Sultans or the Mughals. This situation of near political autonomy of Kutch perhaps became greater during the 18th Century.

An attempt has been made in this study to gain a comprehensive understanding of the developments that took place during the 18th Century including the changes that came into being with the death of the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb in 1707 and the establishment of different principalities. The aim has also been to unravel the Power structure of the region during this volatile period. It was perceived that the changes mentioned above were in the nature of

institutional changes which shaped the new power structure. Power here has to be necessarily seen in terms of localities and not at the pan-regional level as elsewhere. This was one of the peculiarities of Gujarat. The political power and authority was extremely fragmented. The very extent of this fragmentation is what defines 18th Century Gujarat. The existence of many principalities, around 272 that passed under the British rule as princely states, was a product of this period. In fact the contours of the local power structure as it developed during this period were carried into the 19th Century subject to British modifications. Besides the existence of multiple political authorities the increased participation of people from Social, Martial and Economic arena not conventionally connected directly with State-building also contributed towards this fragmentation.

This study begins roughly from the last years of Aurangzeb's reign when the cracks in the Mughal administrative apparatus were becoming apparent. These cracks became wider since the beginning of the 18th Century leading to the complete breakdown of the Mughal power. The most visible result of this breakdown was the pervasive and regular Maratha raids into Gujarat which was largely unchecked by the Mughal officers. The study ends with the establishment of British hegemony in the region. However, the establishment of British hegemony in the region was not uniform. This differed from one principality to another and has been treated accordingly. The affairs of Surat for instance have not been taken into consideration after 1800 when the whole administration of the place had passed into British hands and the Nawabi was abolished. Similarly Bharuch passed into

British hands in 1772 but it was handed over to Sindhia in 1782 as a gift for bringing about the Treaty of Salbai. In 1803 Bharuch was regained by the British. Baroda accepted British paramount power in 1802 and more definitely since the conclusion of the definitive treaty in 1805 and therefore the affairs of Baroda's administration, etc does not concern us after this period. However, it was through Baroda's accepted suzerainty in the rest of the region that the British Resident could further establish the Company's hold on the various principalities of these areas. In addition the areas under the Peshwa's control and that of the Gaekwads in Gujarat were minutely intertwined. This made the British Resident use the Gaekwad as a shield in case of conflicts. This situation makes it imperative to look at the part played by the Gaekwad chieftain in areas outside Baroda well up to 1817-18 from various perspectives. It has also been found that the over lordship of the Gaekwads in Saurashtra was asserted and enforced by the British East India Company after 1802 so as to further its own interests. The British Company became a party in the affairs of Saurashtra since 1807 and in the Mewasi areas of North Gujarat since 1811-12 through the revenue settlements. The British intervention was resented by the parties who were ousted from power by the British and their resistance continued well up to 1815. In 1817-18 with the end of the Peshwa's rule his territories passed into the hands of the British Company. Kutch also accepted British subsidiary alliance in 1819. Through some other treaties and agreements the Company emerged as the suzerain power in the region by 1820 and thus the study also ends here.

Although this study is not concerned with the economic changes it has been found in the course of the study that the political sphere had opened up considerably and the power politics was being affected by the social and economic developments to a greater extent. The enhanced Role of the bankers/Shroffs in the 18^{th} Century politics is a well researched area. In case of Gujarat also the role of the Bankers was enhanced and their participation in State activities was more direct and at times decisive. The perennial want of resources by the rulers and lack of access to ready cash dictated the involvement of the bankers. The bankers/merchants also contributed towards safeguarding towns and Qasbas earlier in the Century when the Marathas used to hold these places for ransom and demanded ready cash for sparing the town from destruction. At that time the bankers/merchants largely provided the money and not the rulers. The administrators and soldiers were also paid in cash which again was defrayed by the bankers. We also find the involvement of the Nagarsheths, etc undertaking such activities as managing the levying of the cesses, etc to safeguard the local population from the undue and harsh exactions from the rulers. The Bhats and Charans, held to be sacred, also became integral to the working of these principalities, to a greater extent than what they were earlier. The situation thus turned out to be more dynamic than hitherto understood.

SIGNIFICANCE OF 18TH CENTURY

It is largely held by the modern scholars that 18th century was a significant period in Indian History. The century witnessed major upheaval in the political situation with the decline and disintegration of the Mughal Empire. While the nature of the decline of the Mughal Empire and the causes for the same has been a matter of intense debate in the recent times, the establishment of various authorities filling the vacuum so created has also engaged the attention of the scholars. While the modern scholars freely use the term 'successor-state' to these 18th century entities in the larger context of India, the use of the term 'State' in the context of 18th century Gujarat has been avoided in this study. This issue is discussed in detail in the 4th chapter of the present study. A thorough study of the establishment of these principalities and the nature of their survival will without doubt provide greater understanding of the process of decentralization that was a significant feature of this period. Towards the end of the century the emergence of the British East India Company as the paramount authority in the sub-continent has been another major concern that has engaged the attention of the scholars since a long time. The nature of British presence, its rise to political power and its expansion was neither uniform nor similar in different regions of the sub-continent. In case of Gujarat, even in the 19th century, the nature of British presence was by and large not direct but through Princely states.

The significance of the 18th century in other areas has also been brought to our notice through many recent studies. The decentralization led to the emergence of a dynamic military market.[1] With the disintegration of the Mughal Empire which was the biggest employer of martial elements and the subsequent struggle between various contenders to resources, the soldiers found ample scope to make fortunes. Many groups organized on ethnic lines found employment as soldiers like Gosains, Arabs, Rohillas, Sindhis, etc. Their success depended on their entrepreneurial skills. It is also being asserted through some recent studies that this period saw significant changes in the collective perceptions of the people proving to be a precursor to 'Communalism'[2].

CHAPTERISATION

This work is divided into six chapters. In the first chapter the breakdown of the Mughal authority in the region has been traced in detail. It has been found that the cracks in the administrative apparatus of Mughal Gujarat were visible from the last forty years of Aurangzeb's reign itself. These cracks opened wide since the beginning of the 18th Century and engulfed the Empire. The Maratha invasion and subsequent occupation of the region was a manifestation

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1 Recent monographs include William R. Pinch, *Warrior Ascetics and Indian Empires,* CUP, New Delhi, 2006; Dirk H.A. Kolff, *Naukar, Rajput & Sepoy, The Ethnohistory of the Military Labour Market in Hindustan, 1450-1850,* CUP, Cambridge, 1990.

2 Iftikhar Ahmad Khan, Surat C. 1795: State, Community and Society, Ph.d dissertation submitted to the Maharaja Sayajirao University, Vadodara, 2007.

of this significant trend. The Maratha occupation of Gujarat itself was not complete. The Marathas under Gaekwad and the Peshwa emerged as the overlord in the region by mid-century but their authority in actual terms was superficial and limited. The situation also worsened due to increased tendencies amongst the Mughal officers to disregard imperial orders. What followed was the rise of local recalcitrant elements that were largely uncontrollable by these officers. The Mughal Nazims and Faujdars were involved in their bid to attain greater control of their *faujdari*s and did not concentrate on maintaining order. They eventually chalked out separate spheres of control and authority called Nawabis. Several such Nawabis sprang up in the course of the first half of the Century in the region.

In the Second chapter an attempt to understand the role of certain social groups in the emerging power structure has been made. Here it was found that the role of the hereditary land right holders working at the semi-official level was enhanced. This was especially the case with the superior right holders called *desai*s in Gujarat. The bhats and charans, originally genealogists to Rajputs and Kathis and held to be sacred by these people, had emerged as important links between the newly emergent principalities and the local populace especially the ryots. In the course of the Century they emerged as the most sought after 'Securities' or sureties in all the activities of the State including revenue collection, inter-Principality relationships and securing the travelers against looters. This situation also increased their resources materially. This position was later filled by the Arab and Sindhi *Sibandi*s as well and much later the British East India

Company undertook similar duties which contributed towards the establishment of British hegemony in the region. The widespread use of Ijara and later its institutionalization was a discernible feature of the Mughal and Maratha administration of 18th century, as also of the rest of the Principalities. This gave rise to institutions like the *Manotidari*, *kamavisdari*, as also sub-farming leading to exploitation of the ryots.

The third chapter looks at the nature of British expansion in the region. The British East India Company was initially a trading concern which came into the possession of Surat castle in 1759 giving it a political status in the region. The Company made three attempts to gain political power at Surat in 1735, 1751 and 1759. The last one was successful. In 1772 the Company conquered the district of Bharuch through armed force. Here the claim of the early British Historians of the Company not having a territorial ambition in this area during this time is belied. The conquest of Bharuch was conceived and well planned keeping in mind the strategic importance of the place as well as the fertility of the Parganas for growing cotton. During the first Anglo-Maratha war Gujarat was the theatre of war. It was also the time when an internal struggle was taking place between two factions of the Gaekwads of Baroda. The British were benefitted by playing one party against the other. Ultimately, Fatehsing Rao Gaekwad, the man in control of Baroda was supported against Govind Rao Gaekwad, the fugitive. In the last phase of the war the Treaty of Kundhela was signed between Fatehsing Rao and the British which proved to be the foundation of Anglo-Gaekwad relations in the

subsequent times. They jointly made several territorial conquests which however had to be ceded back to the Peshwa through the Treaty of Salbai. The first Anglo-Maratha was aborted with the Bombay Presidency losing all the benefits. In 1802 the British were accepted as the overlords by Gaekwads. Internal commotions in the principality led to the British intervention. The British established their Paramount authority at Baroda by defeating Malhar Rao of kadi and later the Arab Sibandis, who had acquired much power in the principality. Through Baroda's authority in Saurashtra and the Mehwasi areas of North and East Gujarat the British authorities extended their hegemony in these areas. The instrument for this was the 'revenue settlements'. The British assumed the role of mediators between the smaller chieftaincies of these areas and the Gaekwad and Peshwa for tribute payment that the Marathas were entitled to as overlords. This ended the annual Mulkgiri or tribute collection expeditions undertaken by the Marathas. Through the Treaty of Poona concluded in 1817-18 the Peshwa's territories in Gujarat, as elsewhere, passed into the control of British East India Company.

The fourth chapter is a discussion on the nature of superior rights in the context of the disputes between various principalities. The authority is seen here as a right to collect the revenues of a given place. The existence of various such claimants in one place gave rise to frequent disputes. These disputes were largely undecided and were carried into the next Century to be resolved through British arbitration. This situation also gave rise to the practice of seeking

'protection' from higher powers with the British Company emerging as the most sought after protector.

The fifth chapter throws some light on the social conditions and the perceptions of the people regarding the existing situation as reflected in the folk literature called *garba*s. It was found that the *ganim* Marathas were feared by the common people. Many *garba*s and *pavada*s were written regarding the depredations committed by the Marathas and also describing their oppressive rule later. Besides this the levying of different kinds of cesses on various pretexts was a constant source of harassment and drain of resources for the people. The situation saw the intervention of the local leaders like Nagarsheths, Shroffs, etc who repeatedly saved the towns from plunderers by paying the ransom money.

The sixth chapter deals with the Military situation in the region. The decline of the Mansabdari system of martial arrangement gave rise to the employment of mercenary system. The sibandis and their head *Jamadar* came to acquire much importance. Here an account of the functions of the Sibandis, their organization, kinds of weapons in vogue then, their Remuneration, etc has been discussed. Amongst the various ethnic groups that were working as Sibandis in Gujarat the Arabs were perhaps the most sought after. They had come to acquire much importance in the power politics in the various principalities as well. The Arab *sibandi*s were dismissed in large numbers from the region through British interference who perceived them as a threat to the establishment of the British hegemony.

SOURCES

This study is an attempt to understand the broader changes that had taken place in the 18th century. As already noted, Gujarat experienced the establishment of several different principalities during this period. These principalities derived their source of legitimacy from different authorities mainly the Mughal Emperor, the Peshwa and the English East India Company. A student of History therefore faces a serious hurdle in terms of sources as there are no homogenous set of documentation that can give an idea of the developments at the regional level during this period. Therefore, the researches carried out so far cover only some areas that were compact and could be studied through a homogenous set of sources, and not the region as a whole. However, understanding the region as a whole is important to a student of medieval History as Gujarat was a compact unit, culturally and politically, prior to the 18th century. Notwithstanding this problem, an attempt has been made here to piece together the information available largely from different conventional sources.

The primary sources for this study are mainly the 'Conventional' sources viz., the Chronicles, Travel accounts and similar compilations. Amongst the Chronicles the *Mirat-i-ahmadi* composed by the last Imperial Diwan Ali Muhammad Khan has been the basic source of information. It contains information up to 1761 in the most detailed manner. *Tarikh-i-Sorath* is another important source pertaining exclusively to the history of Saurashtra with Junagadh

being the centre of the author's attention, during our period of concern. It was written in the 19^{th} century by Ranchodji Amarji, son of Ranchodji Amarji the celebrated *diwan* of Junagadh. This text gives a succinct account of the developments of Saurashtra during this period. This text has a mine of information for this area which is otherwise obscure. *Ahwal-i-Gaekwad*, a Persian work dealing with the rise of the Marathas and their activities in Gujarat has also been used. This text was written in 1827 by Sarabhai Nagar, an official in the Baroda residency. Sarabhai Nagar was commissioned to write a history of Marathas in Gujarat by the British Resident of Baroda. It also helps to corroborate information in the Mirat-i-Ahmadi. *Qissa-i-Ghamghin* is an account of the end of the Bharuch Nawabi and the British take over of Bharuch. It was written by Munshi Abbas Ali, a Munshi in the service of Muazzaz Khan, the last Nawab of Bharuch.

In addition published Documents, mostly letters, have also been used. Important amongst these is the 10 Volume series by the name *Gaekwads of Baroda*. It is the most comprehensive publication of documents with relation to the activities of the Gaekwads in Gujarat, the information coming from the British records. It concentrates largely on the inter-relations of the British and Gaekwads in this quarter of the country, as well as their individual activities. However it suffers from one limitation, it does not provided information on events going beyond the purview of the Gaekwad's involvement. Besides this the *Selections from the Bombay Records* in several volumes chiefly the one containing Alexander Walker's observations on Saurashtra, Ballantine's observations on Mahi-Kantha, Rewa-

Kantha, etc; and that of Robertson on Cambay has been used. Another major source from the Maratha side has come from the published Maratha records in the *Selections from the Poona Daftar* and *Historical Selections from the Baroda State Records*. Besides this certain sundry records like *Selections from the hereditary minister's of Baroda* and the *Selections from the Shastri Daftar* has been found useful. In addition various travel accounts has also been used. An attempt has also been made to study the local contemporary folk literature called g*arba* and *pavada* to gauge the impact of the Maratha intrusion in the region.

DECLINE OF MUGHAL AUTHORITY IN GUJARAT

The beginning of the 18th Century saw major changes in the sub-continent. The death of Aurangzeb, in 1707 A.D. led to a general decline of the Mughal power in the Subah of Gujarat, as in the rest of the Mughal Empire. The most noticeable manifestation of this decline was the steady breakdown of the carefully built Mughal system of administration. The Maratha invasion and the serious disturbances created by such groups as the Kolis,[3] Kathis,[4] Girasias,[5] etc., contributed to the decline of effective Mughal administration and authority in the region in a major way.

The Decline of Mughal authority in the region of Gujarat was the result of a combination of factors and is to be understood at various levels. Mainly it was the interests of the *Umrah* at the

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3 The Kolis are believed to be the indigenous population of Gujarat who were marginalized first by the Rajputs and later by the Gujarat Sultans and the Mughals. They were a recalcitrant section of the Society and frequently indulged in harassing the officers and the people. This activity increased in the 18th Century leading to disorder and chaos. They are frequently referred as *'Muazzaran'* in the Persian sources.

4 Kathis were a tribe of people residing in central Saurashtra and were known to be recalcitrant. Their areas bordered with the sarkar of Ahmadabad. Under effective Mughal authority these elements were kept in check but with the decline of this superior authority their activity increased leading to disorder and insecurity.

5 The Girasias were younger members of the family of local chieftains who were given subsistence by the chiefs. They frequently expanded their fortunes by the use of sword. Their activities were kept in check by the Mughals earlier. During this period the Girasias also took advantage of the decline of superior authority and expanded their base. The role of the Girasias has been explored in detail in subsequent chapters of this study.

Imperial Court; their manipulations in controlling the Subah through Naibs; the percolation of the Imperial factional fight to the level of Subah officials and their subsequent infighting; regular invasions by the Marathas and the failure on part of the Mughal officials to control them, etc, contributed to the weakening of the Mughal administrative mechanism in Gujarat, leading eventually to the disintegration of the Mughal Gujarat. At the Subah level the administrative breakdown is reflected mainly in the abandonment of the practice of separation of offices originally meant to be a check on each other, and the coalescing of offices, either in one person or in one faction; civil wars as a result of growing ambitions amongst the officers to gain greater power; frauds and embezzlements by the officers going unchecked; etc. In the process, there was an erosion of the finer characteristic features of Mughal administration.

The signs of gradual fall-out of the administration and a tendency on the part of officers to disregard Imperial commands in Gujarat were already visible during the last 40 years of the 17^{th} century. There was a further widening of these cracks, in addition to new developments typical to 18^{th} Century that led to the break down of the Mughal Imperial authority in Gujarat. Let us now consider the available evidence to understand this process. Aurangzeb's reign was turbulent for Gujarat. The Mughal-Maratha contest in the Deccan caused disturbances in the Subah, Gujarat being adjacent to the Deccan. During the reign of Aurangzeb three major Maratha attacks took place. In 1664 and 1670 Shivaji attacked and sacked Surat, the

richest port town of Mughal India. In 1706 Dhana Jadhav, a Maratha *sardar*, invaded Gujarat and routed the Mughal army. The Mirat-i-Ahmadi which provides a mine of information for 18th Century Gujarat, surprisingly, does not provide any details of this event. The only detailed source of information on Shivaji's sack of Surat is the English Factory Records. These records provide ample information on the incidents and its implications. In 1664, for three full days the city of Surat was plundered and burnt down.[6] The loot consisted of Rs.20 to 25 lakhs of one day alone, being carried away by 300 porters, each laden with two bags of Rupees, and some Gold. The Marathas also took 28 *sere* of large pearls, with many other Jewels, Diamonds, Rubies and Emeralds from the house of 'the reputed richest merchant in the world' Virji Vora.[7] Besides Virji Vora, other big merchants like Haji Zahid Beg and Haji Qasim, were also looted.[8] Since there was no wall around the city then, the Marathas' task was made easier. In this whole episode, the *Mutsaddi*, Inayat Khan along with other officers, sought refuge in the castle instead of arranging for defense. There is evidence that besides the laxity of administration, some of the Mughal officers were in concert with the Marathas.[9] Shivaji once again attacked Surat in October 1670. This time the English Factors fled to Swali Marine along with their goods to escape depredations. Interestingly, most of the Mughal officers too fled the city and the *shahbandar*, *Qazi* and some eminent merchants sought protection

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6 B.G.Paranjpe, ***English Records on Shivaji 1659-1682***, Shivaji Tercentenary Memorial Series-Vol. VI, 1931, Shiva Charitra Karyalaya, Poona, P. 78.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

9 Shama Mahmood, *Subah Gujarat under Aurangzeb*, unpublished Ph.D dissertation submitted to the Maharaja SayajiRao University of Baroda, 1999, P. 22-23.

from the English.[10] The smaller Rajas of the vicinity took advantage of the situation and attacked the caravans of merchandise in the guise of Shivaji.[11] Following these incidents the trade, especially European trade, suffered heavily.[12]

Other than the direct attacks, the Marathas, from the last quarter of the 17th Century, took possession of the countryside towards the South-east of Surat. In 1672 the smaller forts such as Parnea and Bagvada in the Pardi subdivision of Surat Sarkar were conquered by Shivaji. A Maratha Sardar Moro Trimal conquered Salher in Baglana in the same year[13]. Salher guarded one of the most frequented passes from Deccan into Gujarat and served as a base for Dabhade, the Senapati of Raja Shahu, in his expeditions into Gujarat at the turn of the Century.[14] Ramnagar to the immediate south of Gujarat was also taken. In 1675 Marathas under Hambir Rao collected *Chauth* from Bharuch.[15] In 1686 Sambhaji plundered Bharuch again.[16] Maratha disturbance loomed large in South Gujarat since then and regular reports were received of their presence on the threshold of the region.[17] These conquests facilitated the rapid onslaught of the Marathas in Subah Gujarat following the death of Aurangzeb.

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10 *English Records on Shivaji*, P. 177.
11 Sir Charles Fawcett, *The English Factories in India 1670-1677*, Vol: I, 1936, P. 190.
12 M.S.Commissariate *History of Gujarat, Maratha period 1758-1818*, Vol: III, 1980, Gujarat Vidya Sabha, Ahmedabad, Pp. 290-292.
13 G.H. Desai, *Gazetteer of the Baroda State I*, (now onwards *Baroda State Gazetteer)* 1923, Bombay, Pp. 432-433.
14 *Baroda State Gazetteer*, P.433.
15 Grant Duff, *A History of Marathas*, London, 1826, Vol. I, P. 194.
16 Ibid. P. 242.
17 Ali Mohammad Khan, *Mirat-i-Ahmadi*, transl. M.F.Lokhandwala, Gaekwad's Oriental Series no. 46, P: 318 (now onwards *Mirat*)

Marathas under their leader Dhana Jadhav invaded the region again in1706. Many Mansabdars of repute were either killed or were taken hostage. No strong Subahdar was present at this time in the region. Khwaja Abdul Hamid Khan, the Diwan and Naib-Nazim, was also taken as hostage and had to pay a sum of Rs. 3 lacks for his release.[18]

Besides having to face invasions the administration had also become lax and arbitrary during the last years of Aurangzeb, although regular royal orders were received to put things in order. In 1676 it was reported to the Royal court that the *chaudhrie*s and *muqaddam*s in the Subah were taking Ijara of lands under their own jurisdiction. It was ordered that in both *Jagir* and Khalsa lands, Ijara was not to be given to anybody.[19] In 1666 it was reported that the Nazim of the Subah, Mahabat Khan and other high Mansabdars, Bakshis, etc who were supposed to maintain a combined force of 25 thousand *sawar* could not even muster one thousand if needed. Aurangzeb reacted by recalling the Bakshi and the Waqai-nigar and replacing them.[20] In 1693-94, Sher Afghan Khan, the Faujdar of Sorath intruded into the villages of Dhandhuka *pargana*, the Nazim's *jagir*, and carried away cattle. He was reprimanded and asked not to meddle in the Nazim's *Jagir*.[21] Around 1696 it was reported to the court that many people founded new *purah*s in Ahmedabad. This resulted in the loss of Imperial revenues, as the goods passing through the new *purah*s

[18] The whole episode is covered in *Mirat,* Pp. 318-325.
[19] *Mirat,* P. 260.
[20] Ibid. P.237.
[21] Ibid. P.293.

would not pay the octroi duties to the Government. The Diwan was ordered to settle things as per the customary practice so that Imperial revenues were not lost.[22] In 1704 the Nazim, Prince Muhammed Azam Shah, made appointments for the Faujdari of Baroda, Sorath and Diwani of the Subah on his own. The Emperor reprimanded him, as dismissals and appointments of Imperial officers was the sole prerogative of the Emperor.[23]

During the reign of Aurangzeb we find evidence of charge of multiple offices being held by a single individual. The principle of Mughal administration of not combining *Jagir*dari with Faujdari offices was compromised. In 1693-94 one Sher Afghan Khan held the *Jagir*dari and Faujdari of Sorath.[24] Shuja'at Khan, the Nazim of the Subah from 1685-1702, is perhaps the best example of this trend. His first title was *Muhammad Beg Khan* and later *KarTalab Khan*. He started his career as the Thanedar of Pethapur in Gujarat, later made the Faujdar of Kadi, the Amin of Dholka, etc at different points of time. He also held the dual charge of the Mutsaddi and Faujdari of Surat.[25] Through an intrigue he later came to be appointed as the Nazim of Gujarat and was conferred the title of Shuja'at Khan. Simultaneously, he was made the Naib-Faujdar of Jodhpur.[26] In 1687 he was appointed the Faujdar of three places, Jodhpur Ajmer and

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[22] Ibid. P.299.
[23] Ibid. P.314.
[24] Ibid. P.293.
[25] Ibid. P.280.
[26] Ibid. P.279.

Patan, and this while he continued as the Nazim of Gujarat.[27] Similarly, the Diwan of the Subah, Amanat Khan also held the charge of Mutsaddi of Surat in 1687, in addition to the Diwani.[28] In the same way Syed Idris Khan was the Faujdar and *Jagir*dar of Nadiad around this time.[29] The above instances indicate that the established Mughal Imperial administrative practices were being disregarded by the powerful sections of the nobility leading to arbitrariness in the functioning of the Mughal administration in the Subah. After the death of Aurangzeb these problems got aggravated.

On the other hand, the Maratha depredations continued with greater vigour with Aurangzeb's death. Marathas under Balaji Vishwanath came in the vicinity of Ahmedabad, taking the Jhabua-Godhra route[30] and plundered the area. He did not meet with resistance from any of the Faujdars on the way; they seem to have been deterred by the debacle of 1706 when the Marathas had captured a number of Faujdars who were released only after payment of ransom. The Nazim, Ibrahim Khan, despite having collected a good force under his command choose to negotiate peace with the Marathas and a *Khandani*[31] of Rs 2 lacs 10 thousand was paid to them from the *Bait-ul-Mal.* Ali Mohammad Khan explains this behavior in terms of

27 Ibid. P.283.
28 Ibid. P.283.
29 Ibid. P.291.
30 There were three routes through which the Marathas entered Gujarat. The first one was through Khandesh, crossing the Baba Piara ford into Surat, Second through Jhabua in Malwa to Godhra and thirdly through Idar in the extreme north bordering Malwa.
31 *Khandani* was the money extracted by the Maratha sardars to abstain from Plundering an area.

the absence of any successor to the deceased Mughal Emperor at that time.[32]

Under Ghazi-ud-din Khan Firoz Jung, the next Nazim of Gujarat, many regressive taxes came into existence. He initiated levying of cesses '*abwab*' which were prohibited by Aurangzeb. On foodgrain, fodder for animals and other goods taken to market, an octroi duty @ 1% per cart load started being levied. An additional duty or cess of one rupee was to be collected from a Hindu and half rupee by Muslims on the above articles. This cess was called *Ghulak-i-Nazim*, or the 'Nazim's kitty' and was appropriated by the Nazim. A separate Karori was appointed for the purpose who was independent of the Diwan and other royal officers. Earlier, separate Karoris did the assessment and collection of different kinds of duties. Since the time of Ghazi-ud-din Khan Firoz Jung these two functions were merged in a single Karori. The ambit of merchandise under the new cess was also widened. It was now also levied on the sale of Vegetables, Ghee, etc., considered an innovation by the contemporaries.[33] In the course of time, the amount of revenues from the above levies became huge. Separate accountants were appointed for keeping an account of these revenues.

[32] *Mirat*, P. 333-334.

[33] Dr. Farhat Hasan asserts that this cess was not new but was common during the 17th Century as well. Although such cesses were termed as 'abwab' in Mughal terminology and repeatedly prohibited through royal orders the author asserts that its imposition did not stop. It was part of the 'local taxes' not recorded in the official records. Farhat Hasan, *State and Locality in Mughal India: Power relations in Western India, 1572-1730*, Cambridge, 2006, P. 121. However during the period of our concern this levy had become common and was considered to be a prerogative of the Nazim. It subsequently became as huge source of income as mentioned in the *Mirat*, Pp. 343-344.

Khan Firoz Jung died in 1711. Upon his death, his servants got hold of his treasure, appropriated large amounts of wealth and paid off salaries in arrears to his soldiers and others, without Imperial permission. They mishandled the accounts as well. This was the first recorded instance of high disregard for Imperial regulations and the practice of escheating the properties and wealth of a deceased Mughal Mansabdar by his followers without royal orders. This matter was however taken seriously by the Imperial Court. The Diwan was ordered to confiscate the wealth of the deceased Khan. Armed retainers were sent for his help. Amanat Khan the Mutsaddi of Surat, entitled Shahamat Khan, was appointed as the temporary Nazim with orders to tackle the situation. Shahamat Khan was transferred and replaced by Asaf-ud-Daula as the Nazim of Gujarat shortly after Jahandar Shah's accession to the throne, after the death of Bahadur Shah. It was reported that the preceding two Nazims, Khan Firoz Jung and Shahamat Khan had appropriated the revenues of the *Paibaki* and *Khalsa* lands. The Diwan of the Subah was ordered to transfer the balance into the Imperial treasury; its execution though is doubtful.

With the appointment of Asaf-ud-Daula the factional fights at the Imperial court had reached greater heights. In the province of Gujarat this trend gets reflected in the appointments of the *Naibs* in place of the Nazims themselves taking charge of the Subah. As already mentioned, the Subah of Gujarat was one of the most coveted

regions and was strategically and economically integral to the Mughal Empire. During the early 18th Century any noble wanting to control Deccan naturally aimed at the control of Gujarat as it gave unprecedented power and financial resources to such a noble. This was especially true in case of Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah.[34] During this phase the Nazims kept changing with much greater frequency than before and this reflects upon the factional fights at the Imperial Court. Asad Khan sent Sarbuland Khan as his Naib-Nazim. Daud Khan Panni, a protégé of Zulfiqar Khan, soon replaced him. With the rise of the Sayyid Brothers and the Nizamat of Deccan being given to Hasan Ali Khan, their associate Ajit Singh was made Nazim of Gujarat. Following the end of the Sayyid brothers' hegemony, the victorious party at the Imperial court sent Haider Quli Khan as the Naib-Nazim.[35] The incoming and the outgoing Nazims invariably settled scores by armed struggle. The problem was further aggravated due to the financial crisis experienced by each party.

With the coming of Daud Khan Panni (1714) the Subah went into further administrative chaos. Daud Khan Panni was known to be a good soldier but not adept in the art of administration. He was a Bijapuri noble who had entered Mughal service following the Mughal occupation of Bijapur.[36] He entrusted the administration of the Subah to the *Deccani pandits* who had accompanied him to the subah. The

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[34] Itimad Ali Khan, *Mirat-ul-Haqaiq*, Fraser collection, 124, Bodleian Library, Oxford, f. 66 (a).

[35] Ibid.

[36] Satish Chandra, *Parties and Politics at the Mughal Court 1707-1740,* Aligarh, 1959, P. 5.

Mirat attributes his lack of administrative wisdom as the main reason for the success of the raids made by the kolis into the city of Ahmedabad. The *Deccani pandits* also introduced a cess called *chattaman* to be levied on the Wazifadars and Sayyids.[37] During this time, an Imperial order was received directing the remission of duties collected on Ghee, Vegetables and cotton *mandis* to the Imperial treasury. The Nazim ignored it as it was an additional source of income for him and thus he was not willing to part with the same.[38]

On the recall of Daud Khan Panni, Maharaja Ajit Singh was appointed as the Nazim. He was a confederate of the Sayyid brothers. Perhaps as a check upon their combined power Haider Quli Khan (a protégé of the other party at the Imperial Court) was sent as the Diwan of the Subah. In 1717 Samsam-ud-Daula Khan-i-Dauran, with Khwaja Abdul Hamid Khan as his temporary Naib, replaced Abhay Singh. At this juncture both the parties prepared to fight for the Nizamat, However, his advisors dissuaded the Maharaja and a major civil war was thus averted.[39] In 1718 Haider Quli Khan was appointed as the Naib-Nazim as well as the Diwan. In 1719 however Maharaja Ajit Singh (Abhay Singh's son and successor) was back as the Nazim while the Diwani was given jointly to Nahir Khan and his brother Ruhulla Khan.[40] The frequent transfers of the Nazims created a

[37] *Mirat*, P. 364.
[38] Ibid. P. 357
[39] *Mirat*, P. 377.
[40] Ibid. Pp. 386-387.

situation of uncertainty and affected the general administration of the Subah.

The situation was worsened due to internal fighting amongst the local officers. The higher authorities, involved as they were in their own affairs, could hardly take cognizance of this problem. The first intra-administration tussle took place between Shahamat Khan, the Naib-Nazim and Mohammad Beg Khan, the Faujdar of Patan. The context of it was as follows: Mohammad Beg Khan, the Naib Faujdar of Patan and a relative of Shahamat Khan, was asked to take charge by Shahamat Khan for the above duty till his arrival from Surat. He involved himself in the seizure of Khan Firuz Jung's property. Muhammad Beg, it appears, embezzled some of it and did not deposit the entire property to the Imperial treasury. However, Shahamat Khan took charge as Naib-Nazim of the Suba and relieved Mohammad Beg Khan of the charge. Shortly Shahamat Khan sent men to collect the wealth confiscated by Mohammad Beg Khan. Mohammad Beg Khan resisted this attempt by military force and the battle took place on the streets of Ahmedabad. Elephants, guns and muskets were freely used on both sides. Peace was restored eventually due to the intervention of officers like Meher Ali Khan, the Bakshi and Safdar Khan Babi.[41]

In another event of 1713-14, a confrontation took place at Surat between the Mutsaddi, Muhtarim Khan and the Qilledar, Ahmed Beg.

[41] Ibid. Pp. 346-347.

The conflict ended into an armed struggle between the two parties with aid being summoned from outside by both parties.[42] In 1715 another similar conflict took place again at Surat between Momin Khan, the Mutsaddi and Zia Khan, the Qiledar. The Qiledar was defeated and peace was restored.[43] In 1718 during the Niabat of Haider Quli Khan, a trifling quarrel between the soldiers of Safdar Khan Babi[44] and Haider Quli Khan escalated into a battle while both officers were encamped at Petlad for revenue collection. In this case Safdar Khan Babi was defeated and he fled seeking refuge with the Koli chief of Attarsumba.[45] The two were later reconciled through the intervention of the Diwan of Palanpur.

Meanwhile, the Maratha depredations continued in the region. Dhana Jadhav, a Maratha sardar who had invaded Gujarat in 1706, continued with his predatory activities albeit on a lower scale. He continued to carry out several raids into southeast of Gujarat, mainly controlling the trade route from Burhanpur to Surat and exacting *Khandani* from the caravans. In 1716 Khande Rao Dabhade, a *sardar* active in Mughal Deccan, was appointed as the Senapati by Raja Shahu. He entrusted the charge of raiding Gujarat and settlement of *chauth* to Kanthaji Kadam Bande and Damaji Rao Gaekwad I, and his nephew Pilaji Rao Gaekwad. It was mainly Pilaji who made a lasting

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42 Ibid. P. 355
43 Ibid. P. 362
44 Safdar Khan Babi was appointed as the Faujdar of various areas in early 18th Century. He also took *ijara* of various Parganas. It was the descendents of his family that later established the Nawabis of Junagadh and Balasinor.
45 *Mirat*, Pp. 381-382.

mark on the history of the region. In 1719 he plundered the villages around Surat entering South Gujarat form Khandesh. He succeeded in capturing Sonpara within the jurisdiction of Tokruh, South of Surat from a Bhil Zamindar, built a fort and took up residence there.[46] The new fort came to be called Songadh, which became the nucleus of the rise of Gaekwad rule in Gujarat. Pilaji gradually occupied the Parganas of Surat sarkar and built forts at Konde Vajapur, Sakul Khad (Saekal Kacha of Ahwal), Rupgadh and Sadar Behl and thus consolidated his power in the region. He also befriended the Raja of Rajpipla and Panch Mahal.[47] The Naib Mutsaddi of Surat Shaikh-ul-Islam sent Mohammad Panah and Syed Aqil Khan to repel Pilaji Rao. They were, however, defeated and Mohammad Panah was taken hostage and released subsequently on collection of ransom. Since then Pilaji started making annual incursions deeper into Gujarat and the appointees at Surat, with the exception being Rustam Ali Khan, remained merely passive spectators.[48]

However, some sporadic attempts were made by the Mughal Court to control the Maratha inroads, which proved largely unsuccessful. In 1711 Shahamat Khan, the Nazim successfully repelled Khande Rao Dabhade's attack on Bharuch.[49] In 1719 it was decided by the Royal Court that 5000 *sawar* belonging to Maharaja

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46 *Mirat*, P. 591; *Baroda State Gazetteer*, P. 438; Sarabhai Nagar, *Ahwal-i-Gaekwad*, Gujarat Vidya Sabha collection no.129, f.5(b).

47 *Mirat* , P. 414; *Baroda State Gazetteer*, P. 438; *Ahwal*, f.5(b).

48 *Ahwal*,f.6(a).

49 *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*,Vol. I, Government Central Press, Bombay, 1879, P.299

Abhay Singh must be maintained at Surat and another 5000 *sawar* were to be posted at a distance of 15 *kurohs* at the fords and passes from the Deccan, to stop the Marathas.[50] The Diwan, Nahir Khan was ordered to march immediately to Surat with a cavalry and infantry of 3000 each for the same purpose.

With the end of the Sayyid brothers' hegemony at the Imperial Court and the appointment of Nizam-ul-Mulk to the Wizarat of the Empire, Haider Quli Khan was made the Nazim of Gujarat (1721). He appointed Shuja'at Khan[51] as his Naib. From this time the military struggle between the outgoing and incoming Nazims becomes a feature in Gujarat. A battle lasting for three days took place between the Naib-Nazims, Anup Singh (and Nahir Khan, the Diwan, belonging to the same party) and Shuja'at Khan. Peace was finally restored and Shuja'at Khan came in control of the administration. By this time one can see the rise of a new generation of Faujdars who were localized and distinguished themselves in various offices of the Subah. The fact that they held Ijara of various parganas only gave them greater scope to entrench themselves in the Subah. The Babis under Safdar Khan Babi and Jawan Mard Khan I and Shuja'at Khan and his brothers are the two most noticeable factions. It was inevitable that their interests should clash. Overt clash however was averted since both received patronage of Muiz-ud-Daula Haider Quli Khan, the Nazim of the Subah.

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50 *Mirat*, Pp. 396-397.

51 This Shuja'at Khan is to be distinguished from the earlier one who was a Nazim of Gujarat under Aurangzeb.

In 1722 Haider Quli Khan himself came to take control of the Subah. According to the narration in the Mirat it seems that this noble wanted to breakaway from the Imperial control and his subsequent activities also suggest the same. However, to understand his behavior in the larger context, other contemporary sources become useful.[52] Originally Mohammad Reza, a protégé of Mir Jumla, he rose in Imperial favour during the reign of Farrukhsiyar. He received the title of Haider Quli Khan and was appointed as Diwan of the Deccan Provinces. He did not get on well with Nizam-ul-Mulk, then the Nazim of Deccan. He came back fuming. In 1717 He was given the Diwani of Gujarat along with many other important offices. This was meant as a check upon the combined powers of the Sayyid brothers, who held both Deccan and Gujarat under their control. Haider Quli it seems showed an increase in the revenues of the Surat port and the *khalsa mahals* of Gujarat during his Diwani. He was however not popular with the *ijaradar*s of the region.[53] He also took an important part in ousting the Sayyid brothers. As a reward he was given the post of Imperial Mir Atish as also the Nizamat of Gujarat. Between the time of the fall of the Sayyids and Nizam-ul-Mulk's taking charge of the Wizarat, Haider Quli became very influential at the Royal Court. He is said to have commanded considerable influence over the Emperor. Nizam-ul-Mulk, upon his arrival at Delhi prodded him to

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[52] Jadunath Sarkar, *The Later Mughals,* vol.II, Orient Longman, fourth edition, 1988. It gives a succinct account of this noble's career taking information from various contemporary Persian sources.

[53] Shah Nawaz Khan and Abdul Hayy, *Maathir-ul-Umra,* (ed) H.Beveridge and Baini Prasad, Vol. I, Calcutta, 1941. Pp. 600-601.

take direct charge of his Nizamat in Gujarat (around 1722). This was the background for his subsequent actions in Gujarat. Upon his arrival in the region he started to confiscate the *jagirs* given to Imperial Mansabdars. His *jagirs* near Delhi were therefore confiscated as a punishment. He also seized the Arab horses that were being sent to the Royal Court, as also the wazifas, etc, and started granting *jagirs* to people of his choice. In short, he displayed all signs of rebellion.[54] This brought Nizam-ul-Mulk to Gujarat who had obtained the Nizamat of Gujarat for his son Ghazi-ud-din Khan. Hearing of the Nizam's arrival, Haider Quli sought to befriend the local nobles who were however not prepared to desert the Imperial cause in his favour. He therefore left for Delhi through an alternate route. It seems that his rebellion was not so much aimed against the Emperor whose favour he enjoyed but was against the rising power of the Nizam. This will explain as to why he was accepted back into the Imperial fold without any reservation.

In the absence of any viable arrangement to run the administration of the Subah firmly and the continuing political upheavals, the affairs in the province kept on deteriorating. During the 18th Century the practice of combining several offices in one person that was first noticed in the later 17th Century became rampant. Haider Quli Khan, as mentioned earlier, held simultaneous charges of Provincial Diwan, Mutsaddi of Surat, Diwani of Khalsa lands, Mutsaddi of Cambay, Faujdari of Baroda, Nadot, Arhar Matar, forests

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[54] *Mirat*, P. 408; *Later Mughals*, II, Pp. 127-130.

of the Haveli *pargana* of Ahmedabad, etc.[55] In 1714 Momin Khan was appointed as the Mutsaddi of Surat, Faujdar of Baroda, Pargana of Petlad, Dholka, Bharuch and Nadiad.[56] Nahir Khan, the confidant of Ajit singh, was appointed the Diwan of the Subah, Darogha and Karori of Kathra Parcha, offices of octroi duties, Amin of the arrears of revenues of Ahmedabad Subah, Faujdar of Petlad Pargana and Dholka. Ruhulla Khan, his brother, was given the Naib-Diwani. Again in 1721 Haider Quli was appointed to the Faujdari of Kadi, Patta Chunwal, Pargana of Halwad, Thanadari of Tharad, Rajanpur, Bhamubi, Pethapur and Kheralu, in addition to the Diwani and Nizamat of Gujarat. His relative Sherud-Din Khan was appointed the Bakshi and Waqai-nawis.[57]

During this period, the nature of the office of Diwan was compromised to a large extent leaving the Diwan ineffectual in the administration. During the 17th century, the provincial Diwan was appointed by a royal order. He had civil powers and his duties included collection of revenues from the Khalsa Mahals and dues on charitable endowments, payment of salaries as per rules and looking after financial matters relating to *jagir* assignments.[58] He was also required to look after the general welfare of the ryots and encourage cultivation; keep strict watch over the treasury and report embezzlement; stop collection of *abwab*s, scrutinize accountants,

55 *Mirat*, P.367.
56 *Mirat*, P.361.
57 *Mirat*, P.404.
58 Syed Nawab Ali and C.N.Seddon, *Mirat-i-Ahmadi-Supplement*, Baroda, 1928, p.148.

realize Taqawi, etc.[59] In short, the Diwan was a check on the powers of the Nazim in a Subah. During the 18th Century, following the factional fights amongst the Umrahs and their attempts towards aggrandizing their own position, the Nazim encroached upon the powers and resources of the Diwan. It was in the Nazim that all the powers came to be concentrated and the Diwani was relegated to a subordinate position. Bait-ul-mal was removed from the control of the Diwan and put under the control of the Kotwal in the city and the Faujdar-i-Gard in case of *Purahs*.[60] In the course of time the post of both the offices came to be combined in either one person or one faction. In 1718, as observed earlier, Haider Quli was made the Naib-Nazim as well as the Diwan[61] and in 1721 when he was made the Nazim, his son Jafar Quli was made the Diwan. Maharaja Abhay Singh appointed Anup Singh Bhandari as Naib-Nazim and Nahir Khan as Naib-Diwan. Later Shuja'at Khan was given the *Niabat* of both Nizamat and Diwani.

However it must be observed that the process of decline was not a linear one. Attempts are also noticed in some cases to make the administration conform to the standard Mughal norms. In 1718 a royal order was issued to Diwans of all Subahs to the effect that any servant who was not present in his place of service and has appointed a *gumashta* instead was to be removed from service. During the wizarat of Nizam-ul-mulk, as is well known, attempts were made tighten the

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59 P.Saran, *Provincial Government under the Mughals*, Allahabad, 1941, Pp. 191-192.
60 *Mirat*, P. 490.
61 Ibid. P.379.

reins of administration in provinces. In 1723 a royal order under the seal of the Nizam was sent to the Diwan Fidwi Khan removing the Karora of the Nazim in the katra parcha and certain cesses such as the 'Gulak-i-Nazim' were duly abolished.[62] In addition, a Waqai-nawis was appointed in such places where octroi was collected and also in the Kutcheri of the provincial Diwans. It seems that a tab was sought to be kept on the Diwan's office.[63]

Upon his arrival in the region in 1723 to oust Haider Quli Khan the Nizam appointed his own Naib, Hamid Khan to take charge of the Subah. Hamid Khan was the uncle of the Nizam. By 1725 however the Nizam went to Deccan and declared his independence. The rival party at the Royal court under the leadership of Burhan-ul-Mulk again appointed Sarbuland Khan, this time as the Nazim of Gujarat in place of Ghazi-ud-din Khan. Sarbuland Khan appointed Shuja'at Khan as his Naib and entrusted to him the task of ousting Hamid Khan.

Since this time the process of Mughal decline took a different turn in the region. In the subsequent events the regional factional fights becomes manifest. The inclusion of the Marathas in the regional polity added a new dimension leading closer towards the disintegration of the Subah. The battle between Hamid Khan and Shuja'at Khan's faction forms an important chapter in the history of 18th century Gujarat. Shuja'at Khan, along with his brothers, had

[62] Ibid. P.413.
[63] Ibid. P.413.

emerged as a powerful group in the region, by this time.[64] To oust Hamid Khan from the Subah and thereby reducing Nizam's stake in the region, Shuja'at Khan applied for financial aid from the Imperial Court and he was sanctioned Rs.3 lakhs that was to be defrayed from the revenues of Surat port.[65] Hamid Khan on the other hand allied with Kanthaji Kadam Bande through the manoeuvres of the Nizam.[66] Kanthaji was promised the *chauth* of Gujarat for his support in regaining the Subah from Shuja'at Khan. In the battle that followed, Shuja'at Khan was killed. Following the death of Shuja'at Khan the Marathas entered the city of Ahmedabad for the first time. *Chauth* belonging to Kanthaji was fixed in all the *Mahal*s of the city.[67] As the news of the death of Shuja'at Khan Spread, the Marathas came to the region in hoards. Ibrahim Quli, the younger brother of Shuja'at Khan, attacked Hamid Khan in his house and in the ensuing scuffle, lost his life.[68]

Rustam Ali Khan, who was then the Mutsaddi of Surat and was successful in containing Pilaji Rao Gaekwad's activities, came to

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64 It will not be out of place here to take a brief look at the fortunes of this family that played an important part in shaping the history of this region at this important juncture. Early in the century a Faujdar by the name of Qasim Beg had earned fame in the region through his exploits against the kolis. He however was killed while fighting the kolis of Munjpur in Baroda sarkar.Two other brothers of Qasim beg were similarly killed while in royal service. His other brothers and sons were patronized by Haider Quli Khan. Masum Quli, later Shuja'at Khan comes to notice when he ousted the Marwari Naib of Maharaja Abhay Singh from the Faujdari of Sorath for Haider Quli. He was also appointed as the Naib-Nazim by Haider Quli in 1721 who held on to the Subah by ousting the Marwari faction. He along with his brothers Ibrahim Quli Khan and Rustam Ali Khan had earned much fame especially in fighting the Marathas. They also held Ijara of various places at different points of time.

65 *Mirat,* P. 417.

66 Ibid. P.417.

67 Ibid. P.423.

68 *Mirat,* P. 425.

know of the death of his brothers. He immediately called for a truce with Pilaji and entered into an agreement with him whereby Pilaji agreed to help Rustam Ali Khan in fighting Hamid Khan. However, Pilaji, who could perceive Rustam Ali Khan as his rival as the latter had single handedly stopped Pilaji's inroads in the vicinity of Surat, secretly allied himself with Hamid Khan. Rustam Ali too was killed in the ensuing battle with Hamid Khan. Hamid Khan took control of Ahmedabad in the name of the Nizam. As per agreement made earlier with the Marthas, Hamid Khan agreed that Pilaji be allowed to collect the *chauth* on the south of the Mahi River[69] comprising the districts of Nandod, Champaner, Baroda, Broach, Surat sarkars, and Kanthaji was to collect the *chauth* of *sarkar*s to the north of the Mahi River.[70]

The victory of Hamid Khan was however short-lived. Upon the receipt of the news of the death of Shuja'at Khan and his brothers, Sarbuland Khan was sent by the Emperor to take charge of the Nizamat of Gujarat. The news of his having reached the borders of the Subah emboldened the Faujdars of the Subah and they openly came out against Hamid Khan. Sardar Mohammad Khan Ghorni, the *faujdar* of Kalol (14 kos from Ahmedabad), closed the gates of the town against Hamid Khan and Kanthaji combine; the latter was on way to the region to collect the *chauth* and *peshkash*. Shaikh Illah Yar, along with others, held out Ahmedabad against Hamid Khan[71]

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[69] Invariably referred to as 'this side of Mahi' and 'that side of Mahi' in the contemporary Persian sources.

[70] *Ahwal*, f.7(b).

[71] *Mirat*, P. 440.

who was left with little choice but to leave for Deccan along with Kanthaji.[72] Sarbuland Khan took control of the Subah.

The Marathas however persisted in their endeavour to make *chauth* collection in Gujarat. Upon reaching the region, Sarbuland Khan commissioned his son Khanazad Khan to tackle the Marathas. Pilaji and Kanthaji made Ali Mohan (official Mughal names for Chota Udaipur and Devgadh Bariya) in the east their base and started plundering north and central Gujarat well up to Dholka, Dhandhuka andViramgam. In order to thwart the efforts of Mughal officers both the Maratha sardars started creating disturbances in different areas at the same time. Finding the Marathas undaunted, Sarbuland Khan agreed in 1726 to Kanthaji's claim of *Chauth* on the north of Mahi except Pargana Haveli Ahmedabad and the Ahmedabad city.[73] In 1727 a third faction of the Marathas entered the region. Baji Rao Peshwa sent Udaji Powar as his representative on the invitation of Sarbuland Khan. The rift between the Peshwa and the Senapati Triambak Rao Dabhade in the wake of the rising power of the Peshwa was common knowledge. Through this step, the Nazim sought to undermine the power of Kanthaji and Pilaji who were the representatives of the Maratha Senapati Dabhade. However, no agreement could be reached immediately.[74] In 1729 an agreement finally was reached whereby the Peshwa was bound to oust both Pilaji and Kanthaji from Gujarat and he would in return get the sole rights

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[72] Ibid. P.442.
[73] Ibid. P.447.
[74] Ibid. P.455.

of *chauth* in the region. It seems that the Imperial Court did not welcome this arrangement made by Sarbuland Khan and he was subsequently recalled from Gujarat.

Maharaja Ajit Singh, son of Abhay Singh replaced Sarbuland Khan as the *Nazim*. However, Ajit Singh followed the policy of his predecessor and honoured the agreement reached between the earlier *Nazim* and the Peshwa. The latter arrived near Ahmedabad to undertake the operations personally against Pilaji, who had by then occupied Baroda. The Peshwa, along with Mughal officers, laid siege to Baroda. However, the siege had to be lifted as Nizam-ul-Mulk, who was then a confederate of the Senapati in the Deccan, came close on the Peshwa's heel. The whole exercise thus remained inconclusive. A year later, the Peshwa killed the Senapati Khande Rao Dabhade in the Battle of Bhilupur (situated near Ahmedabad). Umabai Dabhade, the mother of the infant Yashwant Rao Dabhade, the new Senapati took control as the regent. She made Pilaji Rao Gaekwad the sole incharge of *chauth* collection in Gujarat. This alarmed the Nazim, Ajit Singh. In 1732 through an intrigue he got Pilaji murdered in his tent while the latter was on way to the north of region for collection of *chauth*. Ajit Singh immediately crossed the Mahi River and reoccupied Baroda and laid siege to Dabhoi, but failed to occupy it. He succeeded in pushing the Marathas out of the region, though temporarily. The Marathas came back in 1733 once again, under the leadership of Umabai Dabhade, the regent to the infant Senapati, who plundered and pillaged the vicinity of Ahmedabad. The Nazim Ajit Singh was

left with little choice but to settle *chauth* for the year with the Marathas. A *Khandani* of 80,000 was paid and peace was concluded.[75] Since then such Maratha expeditions became an annual affair in this part of the region as well.

In 1735 Baroda was retaken by the Marathas under Mahmaji, brother of Pilaji, from Sher Khan Babi. Around the same time Damaji, son of Pilaji was appointed the deputy by Umabai and was assigned the sole charge of collection of *chauth* of Gujarat. He sent Renkoji to the region north of Mahi River as his Naib. Kanthaji resented this and had to be defeated at Anand Moghri. Since then Kanthaji is not to be seen in Gujarat's politics any more. Around this time, Renkoji, with the connivance of the *desai* of the place, captured *pargana* Viramgam, a fertile area that was part of the Kahlsa *mahal*. Viramgam was also strategically important since it was through this place that Sorath or the Peninsular Gujarat could be reached. Ratan Singh Bhandari, the Naib of the Maharaja who administered the region was known for being oppressive. Besides, he also could not get on well with the local officers. A disagreement with Momin Khan prompted Momin Khan to conspire against the Maharaja Ajit Singh at the Imperial Court. He obtained a *sanad* to oust the Naib, Ratan Singh Bhandari from Ahmedabad and take control as the Nazim himself. He sought Renkoji's aid for this and agreed to share half the revenues of the Subah except that of the city and *pargana* Haveli Ahmedabad and the port of Cambay. Later, he also agreed to share the revenues of Haveli

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[75] Ibid. P.507.

pargana and exchange the full revenues of Viramgam *pargana* in lieu of Cambay.[76] In 1736-37, after a year long siege, Ahmadabad finally fell into the hands of Najm-ud-Daula Momin Khan I. This was the beginning of the joint Mughal-Maratha rule in the region.[77] The Post Momin Khan Phase was wrought with factional fights between the local officers for the post of Nizamat and the Imperial court ceased to play any decisive role in the politics of Gujarat. The Court well up to 1752 made sporadic attempts to appoint Nazims but it was more of a ritual than a display of sovereign power.

In the rest of the Subah as well the disintegration of Imperial Mughal authority had begun simultaneously. At Surat since the death of Rustam Ali Khan, his son Sohrab Khan, entitled Behram Khan, continued to rule as the 'Nawab', independent of Ahmadabad. The Imperial attempts at replacing him, first with Mustafid Khan and then Momin Khan were fruitless. Surat chalked out its own history since then. In 1731, while Nizam-ul-Mulk was encamped in the vicinity of Surat having followed Baji Rao Peshwa, Abdullah Beg, the Faujdar of Bharuch, appointed earlier by Mubariz-ul-Mulk Sarbuland Khan, approached the Nizam and obtained a *sanad* acknowledging Abdullah Beg as his deputy. He was also given the title of Nek Alam Khan. The *Sarkar* of Bharuch consisting of the *parganas* of Bharuch, Amod, Ankleshwar, Hansot, Jambusar and Olpad was the personal *jagir* of the Nizam.[78] Even after the Nizam's withdrawal from the Imperial

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[76] Ibid. P.541.
[77] Ibid. P.576.
[78] Ibid. P.485.

capital his *jagirs* were not confiscated. Thus, the Nawabi of Bharuch was formed although it was much later (1758), under Nek Nam Khan II that a formal *sanad* was obtained from the Court for the Nawabi. As already seen, Baroda, Dabhoi, Champaner, Viramgam, etc had fallen under Maratha control. Although Cambay was not independent, it was marked out as Momin Khan's personal sphere from around 1730's, as seen in the terms of agreement reached between Renkoji and Momin Khan in the sharing of Subah. In the Peninsula of Gujarat it was only in 1747 that Sher Khan Babi, titled as Bahadur Khan formed the Junagadh Nawabi. But Mughal authority in the peninsula started declining early in the century. This was largely unchecked due to the preoccupations of the officers with the mainland. The authority of the Faujdar of Sorath came to be confined to the area called 'New Sorath'.[79] By 1727 the Faujdar entirely lost control of the *thanas*. The *thanadar*s of Mangrol, Kutiana, Una-Delwada, Sutrapada, Somnath-Patan, etc became independent.[80] Nawanagar, the biggest *peshkashi zamindari* in the Peninsula was included in the Imperial Khalsa in the last quarter of the 17th Century by Aurangzeb. It became independent soon after Aurangzeb's death. The Jethwa chief, a *bantha* (*wanta*) holder of Chhaya occupied Porbandar, a rich port town on the southern most tip of the Peninsula and started asserting himself in this area. Similarly, the Gohel chief of Sihor, a small chieftain to the southeast of the Peninsula founded the Bhavnagar port and made it his capital in 1723. It was these chieftains who expanded their spheres of activity in the course of the century and became decisive in the new

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[79] M. S. Commissariate, *History of Gujarat*, II, Ahmedabad, 1980, P.433.
[80] Ibid.

power Structure in their respective localities. Thus, by 1740 the last vestiges of the effective Mughal authority were completely lost and a new power structure was taking its place.

THE NEW POWER STRUCTURE

The disintegration of the Mughal Empire in Gujarat led to the gradual emergence of various independent political entities in the region. The composition and structure of each polity differed from the other in many respects. However, there were certain characteristics that were common in the entire region. These features are to be seen as a natural outcome of a situation calling for realignment at the political level. The newly emergent polities hardly had any control over these factors/elements. They lacked the necessary administrative apparatus to put into force a more feasible alternative. The perennial want of resources experienced by these polities was an added hurdle.

We have seen in the earlier chapter that the effective Mughal authority had declined by about the middle of 1730's. The pervasive presence of the Marathas was felt by their occupation of Dabhoi, Baroda, Champaner, Viramgam and settlement of regular Chauth in Bharuch, Cambay and Surat. In 1737-38 the Subah came to be administered jointly by the Mughals and the Marathas. In 1758 Ahmadabad came under firm authority of the Peshwa's officers thereby establishing Maratha rule in the region of Gujarat. Under the

various *Sarsubahdars*[81] after 1758 the smaller Rajput and Koli chiefs to the North and North-east of the region were subdued and a claim to *Salami* or *Udhad Jamabandi*[82] was established by the Marathas. Similarly, in Saurashtra the Marathas could establish a right to tribute from the Chieftains called *khandani.* The decline of the Mughal authority, the subsequent rise of the new political entities and the establishment of Maratha rule in the region led to the emergence of a number of power wielders at the local level. In the following pages we will trace the fortunes of these local potentates in various parts of Gujarat.

SAURASHTRA

The Peninsula of Gujarat known in the Mughal sources as Sorath comprised mainly of the Sarkar by the same name and some other Peshkashi Zamindaris and *Bantha* (wanta) holding chiefdoms. Except for the Sorath *sarkar*, with Junagadh as its capital, other areas in Saurashtra were not administered directly by the Mughals even in the 17th Century. The decline of the Mughal power brought definite changes in the power relations of this sub-region as well. Since 1722 the Maratha incursions into Saurashtra had started on a regular basis. In the initial stages the Marathas did gain a foothold here but later they could only collect the tribute through the Mulkgiri expeditions. The size of Sorath *sarkar* was reduced by 1727 as the *Faujdars* of Sorath lost control over the outlying thanas. The frequent change of

81 Representatives of the Peshwa, similar to Mughal Nazim.

82 Walter Hamilton, *Description of Hindostan, A General, Statistical and Historical Description of Hindostan and the adjacent Countries,* Vol. I, Delhi, 1971, P. 607.

faujdars in the subsequent years and their inability to crystallize their hold over this *faujdari* led to a situation of chaos. The only Mughal *faujdar* capable of administering the area effectively was Sher Khan Babi. He was consequently made the *Naib-faujdar* of the region in 1727 by Ghulam Muhiyuddin Khan, who succeeded as *faujdar* after the death of his father, Asad Khan.[83] Sher Khan was also given the *Ijara* of the place for Rs.80, 000[84]. In 1730 Mir Ismail replaced Sher Khan Babi.[85] Later, Behram Khan, on being ousted from Surat, was appointed to the *faujdari* of Sorath replacing Mir Ismail. He was also given the additional charge of Viramgam for the possession of which he had to contest with the Naib-*Nazim*, Ratan Singh Bhandari. He therefore left Syed Aqil Khan as his Naib at Junagadh and went to Viramgam. In the battle that ensued, Behram Khan was killed. Hizbar Khan was then appointed as the *faujdar* of Junagadh around 1740 and he gave the Niabat to Mir Dost'Ali Khan. However, Mir Dost Khan and Sadiq Khan, the joint *faujdars* of the place could not manage its affairs. The *ryots* and the *Desais* of the place, therefore, sent one Dalpat Ram, who was the *vakil* of the Arab *sibandis*, to bring Sher Khan Babi to Junagadh.[86] The *Mirat* attributes Mir Dost Ali's inability to pay his soldiers as the reason for the recall of Sher Khan Babi. Sher Khan Babi took over the administration from Mir Dost Ali. It seems that Sher Khan Babi could gain local support i.e., from the *ryots* and *desais* because he took the *ijara* of this area several times in the past, both from the Mughal Subahdars and the Marathas. He is also said to

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83 *Mirat*, P. 354.

84 Ranchodji Amarji, *Tarikh-i-Sorath*, tranls. E. Rehatsek, London, 1882, P.134. In case of 18th Century the official word *Naib* invariably implied taking of the post on *ijara*.

85 *Mirat*, *P*.469.

86 *Tarikh-i-sorath*, P.139.

have conducted revenue settlements of the region prior to the collection of *peshkash* by the *Nazim* of Ahmadabad. He also used to be the surety holder for the revenue payments of the local *zamindar*s of Sorath as well as mainland Gujarat.[87] Sher Khan assumed the title of 'Bahadur Khan' and became the first Nawab of Junagadh in 1747.

The power groups at Junagadh comprised of the Sayyids, Nagars and the Qasbatis. Amongst these, the Sayyids and Nagars were exempt from payment of *zakat.*[88] The only other group exempt from *zakat* was of the *Sipahis.*[89] The Sayyids, Bokhari and Qadiri, were *wazifadars* of the Sultans and their grants were renewed by the Mughals. By the 18th Century they seem to have assumed zamindari rights in Sorath. They are said to have expelled the Waghelas, the original zamindars of Mangrol and occupied it themselves.[90] They had also held land in Kodinar and Kutiana in *wazifa.* At Kutiana the Sayyids had built two stone forts in the wake of the disturbances in the early 18th Century and became independent of Junagadh *faujdar.* These invited Niamat Khan Lodi to administer the place. However, later they ousted him and invited Rana Surtanji of Porbandar for the same. Still later Hashim Khan, the adopted son of Bahadur Khan Babi was called in. It was from him that Diwan Amarji wrested this place and included it into Junagadh's possession.[91]

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87 Ibid. P.138.
88 Ibid. P.33.
89 Sipahis were originally Afghans and were in the profession of soldiery. They were given small land grants by the Gujarat Sultans in this area and in course of time, they became well entrenched in the region.
90 *Tarikh-i-sorath*, P. 52.
91 Ibid. Pp. 49-50.

The next important group was of the Qasbatis. The definition of the Qasbatis is not available in our sources. Neither is their origin specified. What seems definite is that this was a section of the indigenous population residing in the Qasbas with soldiery as their profession. The Qasbatis of Dholka were well known. Prof. S.C.Mishra says that the Qasbatis were an agrarian community similar to Girasias and concedes that their origin is dubious.[92] Qasbatis in the 18th century had emerged as a power group in many of the major urban centers and fortified towns. There seems to have been a constant tussle between the Sayyid Wazifadars and the Qasbatis to take control of the fortifications in this sub-region. This is borne by several instances. At Mangrol, Shaikh Mian, the son of Qazi Fakhrud-din, a Syed, ousted the Peshwa's *thanadar* Jadhav Jaswant in 1748 and took control of the fort and the *pargana* of Mangrol. His main supporters were the Patani-Qasbatis[93] of Mangrol. He later ousted the *qasbatis* from this place and ruled independently and for this the latter nursed a grudge against him.[94] In 1770-71 Latif Mian another Sayyid from Delwada conquered Una from the Qasbatis of that place. However, later, due to Amarji's interference the place was restored to the Qasbatis.[95]

The Nagars who held the *desaigiri* rights in the Mangrol *pargana*, as elsewhere in Saurashtra, had emerged as the third most important power group during this period. The Nagars were thus an

92 S.C.Mishra, *Muslim Communities in Gujarat*, 2nd Edition, 1985, New Delhi, Pp.72-73.
93 According to the *Tarikh-i-Sorath* Patanis were Qasbatis converted to Islam. This implies that not all Qasbatis were Muslims as suggested by the British sources.
94 *Tarikh-i-Sorath*, Pp. 53 & 66.
95 Ibid. P.78.

influential group and therefore any one who wanted to consolidate his position in the region tried to befriend them and seek their help.[96] The Nagars had come to hold important administrative positions in the administration of the 18th Century principalities of Gujarat, especially because of their fluency with Persian and Marathi languages.[97] The Nagars expanded their power under the tutelage of the Diwan of Junagadh, Ranchodji Amarji in Junagadh. He single handedly expanded the possessions of this Nawabi during the period after Bahadur Khan. Bahadur Khan Babi ruled over the much-reduced area of Sorath and tried to expand his principality and conquered the fort of Veraval with the support of Niamat Khan Lodhi. He was, however, too preoccupied with the affairs of mainland as he was holding Balasinor. Due to this reason he remained away from Sorath for long and his wives looked after Junagadh's administration. Consequently, after his death in 1758 the stability of the kingdom was adversely affected. Many of Sorath's areas were encroached upon because of the expansionist activities of the wanta chieftains of Porbandar, Gondal, Bhavnagar and Nawanagar while the outlying *thanas* of Mangrol, Veraval, Kutiana, Una-Delwada, Amreli, etc were separated from Junagadh, the *thanadar*s declaring their independence. New forts like Sutrapada, Hirakot, Dhamlej, Lodhwa, Pushnavara, Lathi, etc came up as symbols of assertion of independence by different power groups in respective regions.[98] It was under these conditions that Amarji came to control the affairs of Junagadh. The Marathas were levying tribute on

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96 Ibid.146.

97 C.R.Naik, *Gujarat ma Nagaron nu Farsi Bhasha ane sahityanu Khedan,* Ahmedabad, 1950, passim.

98 *Tarikh-i-sorath*, P.64.

all the principalities here since 1724-25 except for Junagadh. In Kodinar the Marathas obtained 50% of the revenue but Amarji succeeded in repelling them and fixed the Peshkash of this place at Rs. 5000.[99] At Mangrol the Peshwa had established a Thana around 1737. However, the *zamindars* of the *pargana* migrated from the region to Junagadh and adjoining areas as a result of the harassment from Naib Nataji, the Naib of the Peshwa.[100] The Musalmans and the Jats were also harassed on account of the *ekadashi* and Monday fasting, possibly forcing a shut down of business on these days. These factors were responsible for Shaikh Mian's success in the conquest of Mangrol in 1748 and expelling of the Maratha ruler.[101]

Amarji had come to Junagadh at the head of a band of Arab sibandis and offered to conquer the fort of Verawal from Shaikh Mian of Mangrol who had taken it from Sultana Bibi, aunt of the Nawab. He was 18 years old then. The new Nawab, Mahabat Khan agreed to take him into service if he could accomplish the above task. Following his success in this venture, he was employed, although he was not given the charge of the *Mulki* or revenue and Judiciary departments immediately.[102] It was only after the fort of Talaja was conquered in 1771 by the joint forces of the British East India Company, Bhavnagar chief, the Nawab of Cambay and Amarji from Junagadh that he was given the insignia of the Diwan like *palki*, etc.[103] Following this he made many conquests in the peninsula adding to Junagadh's

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99 Ibid. P.77.
100 Ibid. P.52.
101 Ibid.Pp. 52-53.
102 Ibid. P.148.
103 Ibid.Pp. 150-151.

possessions. Amarji conquered Sutrapada from Chand Qasbati, a Patani Qasbati. Kutiana was also conquered from Hashim Khan before Rana Surtanji of Porbandar could purchase it through an intrigue.[104] He also attacked Mangrol and could fix half the share of its revenue as the Nawab's share.[105] The joint forces of Amarji and Mehraman Khawas of Nawanagar reduced the port of Okha.[106] In 1774-75 the tribute of Jhalawad was fixed.[107]

Diwan Amarji thus stood out as the most important person in the state. He consolidated his position also because the successive Nawabs of Junagadh, Mahabat Khan and Hamid Khan were both of a weak disposition. During this period, the Amarji asserted his position and placed his own trusted people at important positions. The brothers, sons and other close relatives of the Diwan belonging to the Nagar caste, wielded the real powers in the state. The Arab Sibandis who were employed since earliest times by Amarji also remained his confidants. The name of one Salim Jamadar amongst his main supporters appears frequently

Another reason for Amarji's importance was that he also enjoyed the trust of the Marathas. Aburai Mahipatrai, the *sarsubah* of Ahmadabad, entrusted Amarji the work of revenue collection of the share of the Marathas.[108] In spite of this, Amarji continued to oppose the Marathas whenever the interests of Junagadh were involved. In

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104 Ibid. P.150.
105 Ibid.P.152.
106 Ibid.Pp.159-160.
107 Ibid.P.160.
108 *Tarikh-i-Sorath*,P.161.

1777 one Jiwaji Shamraj, deputy of Fatehsing Gaekwad, occupied the fort of Amreli. He tried to establish an independent rule there. Amarji attacked him and destroyed the fort of Amreli and expelled the Maratha sardar from Saurashtra.[109] Following this incident Fatehsing invaded the peninsula but before military confrontation could begin, the various chieftains brought about an agreement and presents were exchanged between Amarji and Fatehsing. In 1777 also Fatehsing could not levy any tribute in Saurashtra because of Amarji.[110] Similarly Amarji could defeat Amrit Rai and Thoban, Peshwa's representatives at about the same time.[111]

The Diwan, in the process of expanding his power also made many enemies. The Gondal Chief Jadeja Kumbhaji was chief amongst them. He was an energetic ruler with a small area of authority in the northwest of Junagadh. He aspired to expand his possessions at the expense of Junagadh. He was a man of resources and constantly intrigued against the Diwan. Mehraman Khawas, the Diwan of Nawanagar was another of Amarji's enemies. Rana Surtanji of Porbandar and Shaikh Mian of Mangrol, as also Raja Wakhatsinh held grudge against him. They had realized that so long as Amarji was at the helm of affairs at Junagadh, they would not be able to achieve their ambitions in the region. Therefore they indulged in intrigues to remove him. The nature of dealings between the Nawab and Amarji also contributed in the breach of relations between them. Amarji's family was amongst the *desai*s of Mangrol *pargana* and they were

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109 Ibid. Pp. 163-164; J.W.Watson (ed),*Statistical Account of Junagadh*, Bombay, 1883, P.40.

110 *Statistical account of Junagadh*, Pp. 40-41.

111 Ibid. Pp. 39-40.

resourceful and powerful, as noticed before. They also took *Ijaras* of various places, which was practically perpetual. Being a man of resources, Amarji, the Diwan used to give loans to the Nawab as the latter was always in need of money. In the course of time the Nawab had a huge debt to pay to Amarji and had mortgaged revenues of various places to him. Amarji was the beneficiary at the expense of the Nawab. In addition to this, the Arab *sibandis* who were largely employed in this chieftaincy, were defrayed their salaries by the Diwan who also acted as their Vakil. The *sibandis* therefore, paid direct allegiance to him and not to the Nawab. Under these situations the intriguers succeeded in precipitating a conflict between the Nawab and Diwan Amarji and Nawab Mahabat Khan assassinated Amarji in 1784. The members of Amarji's family were imprisoned.

Immediate to this event, the Nawab levied zakat on the Nagars and collected considerable amount of money. The Nawab, however, could not reap the benefits of his act. The Marathas, Fatehsing Gaekwad and Rupaji Sindhia, on behalf of the Peshwa intervened as overlords and restored Amarji's sons to power. The Nawab had to grant immunity to Amarji's family as a price for Amarji's assassination. The outstanding payments of the late Diwan by the Nawab had amounted to a sum of 60 lakhs of Jam Kodis. It was agreed that the *parganas* of Una, Delwada, Mangrol, Sil and Dilwasa were to be mortgaged to his family by the Nawab until the liquidation of the above debt with interest. Besides this, the Nawab also had to cede four villages of Halyad, Bhansan, Antaroli and Akhodar as compensation for the murder of the Diwan. In addition to that, the

children of the Diwan were to receive 5 villages each from Mangrol and Sutrapada respectively.[112] Raghunathji and Dulabji, sons of Amarji, were also appointed jointly as Diwans. Their position was however not stable as the Nawab continued to hold grudge against them, and their representatives who administered the fortifications under Junagadh's authority were ousted one by one by the Nawab. They had to leave Junagadh later and found employment in Nawanagar for some years. They had to be recalled by the Nawab found it difficult to manage financial affairs. The relations between the Nawab and the Diwan brothers continued to be conflict ridden. With the death of Dulabji the power of the Diwan family was greatly reduced. Raghunathji continued to function as the Diwan well up to the end of Hamid Khan's reign but could not exercise much hold over the Nawab as his late father. With the succession of Bahadur Khan II in 1815 Umar Mukhasan, an Arab Jamadar, became all-powerful at Junagadh. Raghunathji quit the office of the Diwan because of a fall-out with the regent-mother of the new Nawab. She had kept him out of the revenue settlement made with the English East India Company. With the coming of the British, the power relations in the region underwent a change. Umar Mukhasan Jamadar was soon ousted from Junagadh, and Raghunathji, who was seen as a threat to the exercise of British influence at Junagadh, was also kept out of Durbar affairs. Sunderji Shivji, a horse trader from Kutch, on the recommendation of Captain Ballantine, the officer in charge of Kathiawad affairs was appointed the Diwan of Junagdh. It was Sunderji Shivji who made over Junagadh's Mulkgiri rights in Jhalawad to the Britsh through an

112 Ibid. Pp. 174-175.

agreement. Later, the fortification of Kutiana, which was considered a right of the Amarji family, was taken away from Raghunathji and handed over to the Gaekwad, a protégé of the British.

At the lower level a constant struggle between Porbandar and Mangrol was going on during this period. Shaikh Mian of Mangrol's resources proved to be inadequate and he used to occasionally raid the Kathiawad area and carry away cattle from that region so that he could pay salaries to his soldiers. He also levied tribute on Keshod, Chorwad, Kodinar, Patan and Porbandar.[113] Similarly, the chieftain of Porbandar too collected tribute from villages belonging to Mangrol.

Bhavnagar and Nawanagar, on the other hand, expanded their spheres of authority after Amarji's death. This was made possible, as the Gaekwad chieftaincy had become lax in asserting its authority on this region following its own internal problems. The Maratha *Khandani* had fallen into arrears of past several years. The situation was favourable for both Bhavnagar and Nawanagar chieftains to expand their territories at the expense of their neighbours, the Kathis and their own *Bhayad.* The increased power of the Bhavnagar chieftain could be gauged from the fact that he could successfully defy the Gaekwad Mulkgiri army under Shivram Gardi in the last years of the 18th Century. This tendency of encroachments and expansion at the cost of each other by the chieftain's of Saurashtra ended when the British were able to enforce their revenue settlements in the region.

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113 Ibid. P.53

HEREDITARY SUPERIOR RIGHT HOLDERS

During the 18th Century, following the disturbed conditions, the balance in the agrarian relationships brought about under the Mughals was disturbed to a great extent. Anyone who was in a position to gain an advantage attempted to augment his resources and power at the expense of the other. In these anarchic conditions invariably the hereditary superior right holders benefited the most. These superior right holders had accumulated wealth from the beginning of the century. Amongst them the *desai* were the most important. Many of the *desais* had been holding *ijara* of lands during this period and hence they were a well-entrenched section of agrarian society of the time. By virtue of he being in-charge of the *pargana* the *desai* had access to the real state of the *jama,* the methods of assessment and collection in the *pargana* and such details that were useful to the new rulers, the Marathas. The support of the *desais*, therefore, became extremely important for the Marathas.

These landed elements played a pivotal role in the emergence of several independent political entities as well. In case of the Gaekwad's occupation of Baroda it was the *desai*s and *muqaddams* of

Baroda and surrounding areas[114] viz., Dala Muqaddam of Padra, *desais* of Bhayli and Chhani who invited Pilaji to occupy Baroda and supported him in the operations.[115] Similarly at Viramgam, it was the *desai* Bhausingh, who invited Renkoji, the Naib of Damaji Gaekwad, to occupy Viramgam *pargana*. It will be worthwhile to take note of the events leading to Damaji's occupation of Viramgam. Udaikiran the *desai* of Viramgam was a wealthy and influential person, probably also the *ijaradar* of the *pargana*. During the period of political instability of early 18th Century, a *Tank* Qasbati murdered him over a personal dispute. Safdar Khan Babi, the *faujdar* of Viramgam also died almost the same time. Therefore, Bhau Singh, the son of the deceased *desai* approached the *Nazim* Mubariz-ul-Mulk Sarbuland Khan demanding action against the culprits. The *Nazim* did not take any action in the matter, as he was busy resisting the new *Nazim* who was sent to take the charge from him. Bhau Singh had, in the mean while, started managing the revenue affairs of the *pargana*. In 1733 Ratan Singh Bhandari, the Naib *Nazim* set his eyes on the wealth of this family. He accordingly set out a plan whereby Jawan Mard Khan, the *faujdar* of that place was asked to arrest the *desai* and send him in chains to Ahmadabad. When Jawan Mard Khan arrested the *desai*, those who had stood sureties for Jawan Mard Khan when he was appointed the *faujdar* threatened him with dire consequences if the latter sent the *desai* to the Naib Nazim. We do not have any information about these surety holders in our sources, but they were certainly people with power and influence. The *faujdar* had to yield

[114] Padra, Bhayli and Chhani are villages on the outskirts of Baroda town.
[115] *Baroda State Gazetteer*, Pp. 439-440.

before their threat and set the *desai* free.[116] This incident made the *desai* apprehensive of his safety from the Mughal officers and on the first available pretext he invited Renkoji to take control of the Fort of Viramgam. He was perhaps under the impression that the Marathas, who were emerging as a power in the region, would be able to provide better security to him than the Mughals. His hopes were belied when he realized that the Marathas too were eyeing the wealth of the *pargana*.

The *desai* soon decided to get rid of the Marathas from Viramgam. He raised a force consisting of the Arab and Rohilla *sibandis* and shut the doors of the fort on the Marathas. Renkoji laid siege to the fort. When the siege persisted, the sibandis started clamouring for their salary from the *desai*. The latter had no other option than to sue for peace with the Marathas. In the agreement that followed, the Marathas gave Bhausingh *desai* the town of Patri/Patdi, situated on the border of the Rann of Cutch, along with its dependencies, in exchange for Viramgam. These dependencies consisted of 8 villages taken from Kathiawad and 16 villages from Viramgam. In this way in 1740-41 the *Pargana* of Viramgam passed into Maratha hands.[117] The *desai* of Viramgam, on the other hand, became the ruler of Patri, which later became a princely state under the British.

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116 *Mirat*, P. 512.
117 Ibid. Pp .600-601.

A similar incident that shows the power of the landed classes is that of Baroda. Dala, the *muqaddam* of Padra was a wealthy and influential man. As mentioned earlier, it was at his behest that Pilaji had occupied Baroda. Following the murder of PilajiRao, the Mughals under the Nizamat of Maharaja Abhay Singh reoccupied Baroda. While the Maharaja was settling the affairs of the place, Dala went to meet him as he wished to take the *ijara* of Baroda *pargana*. During the meeting he realized that the Maharaja was intent on arresting him and fleece him of his wealth. Dala however succeeded in escaping from the custody of the Nazim. Later, he wrote to the Nazim that if the latter desired to receive stable income from him, he should appoint Sardar Mohammad Khan Ghorni as the *faujdar* of Baroda.[118] That Mohammad Khan Ghorni was subsequently appointed as the *faujdar* of Baroda shows the clout that the *muqaddam* enjoyed *vis a vis* the administration. Later it was with his help that Mahmaji[119] captured Baroda from Sher Khan Babi and it passed permanently into Gaekwad's control.[120]

The *desais* also seem to have further consolidated their economic and social position during the course of the century. We have already observed how one of them became the chief of a principality, Bhau Singh, the *desai* of Viramgam becoming the chief of Patri. During the rule of the Peshwa some of them became *kamavisdars* and *manotidars*.

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118 Ibid.

119 His name is given differently in different sources: Mahaji in *Ahwal*, Mahmaji in *Mirat* and Mahadji in the *Baroda State Gazetteer* I.

120 *Mirat*, P. 513.

The office of a *kamavisdar* was central to the Maratha revenue administration. In him was vested the authority to collect revenue, administer police and act as judicial officer. He was usually given the charge of one *pargana* and in some cases more than one *pargana*. *Karkuns* (clerks) and Sibandis assisted him. Upon appointment a *kamavisdar* had to pay at least half the amount of *Ijara*, called *rasad* to the Marathas. The other half was given at the end of the stipulated period of his office, after deduction of the expenses. During the Maratha period a *kamavisdar* was most of the time an outsider. He had to seek local help in performance of his duties. Besides, he found it difficult to administer all the *mahals* under his control, as he was not familiar with local revenue administrative practices. He, therefore, farmed out such *mahals* especially the *sair mahals*, usually to the local people, thus leading to the practice of sub-farming. Very often it was the local *desai*, who being a man of means, would take such *ijara*s. As the Marathas got entrenched in the region the *desai*s turned *kamavisdar*s and held *ijara*s themselves. In both cases the *desai* made the *jamabandi* with the village Patel directly.[121]

Since there was a time lag between the appointment of the *kamavisdar* and his actual control of the territory assigned to him, he had to make arrangements with the *amin and the desai*s for realization of revenue for the period prior to taking actual charge of the place.

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[121] Jaspal Kaur Dhot, *Economy and Society of Northern Gujarat with Special Reference toKheda District,* 1750-1850, unpublished Ph.d Dessertation, Maharaja SayajiRao University, Baroda, 1986, P.234. The author has reproduced these statistics from the Marathi records in the Peshwa Daftar.

This arrangement was termed as *ta'ahud*[122] and the holders of such a charge as *muta'ahids*.[123] For this service the *muta'ahid* received a certain share of the revenue collection.[124] This arrangement was also resorted to by *kamavisdars* for bringing wasteland under and villages depopulated for various reasons, under cultivation.

The dependence of the *kamavisdars* on superior land right holders like the *desais* was also because of their frequent transfers. For instance, in *pargana* Kheda, between 1752 and 1815, 65 *kamavisdars* were appointed that works out the average term of one year to each *kamavisdar*. The tenures of such *ijaras* varied between one to five years.[125]

During the second half of the eighteenth century we notice an increase in the incidence of *desais* turning *kamavisdars* either in the same *parganas* or other *parganas*. In Nadiad Bapuji *desai* held the *ijara* of the *Pargana* in 1789-90.[126] Balaji Yamaji, the Kamavisdar was also the *desai* of Balesar *pargana*.[127] Sureshwar *desai* of Baroda *pargana* held the *Ijara* of Baroda, Ghode, Shinor, Koral, Rajpipla and

122 S.Hasan Mahmud, *An Eighteenth Century Agrarian Manual: Yasin's Datur-i-Malguzari*, Kitab Bhavan, New Delhi, 2000, P. 162.

123 Ibid.

124 Jaspal Kaur Dhot, op,cit., P.292.

125 Alexander Walker, *Selections from the Bombay Government no: XXXIX, New Series, Part-I*, Bombay, 1856, P. 25.

126 Jaspal Kaur Dhot, op, cit., Pp. 234-235.

127 Baroda State Records, *Historical Selections from the Baroda State Records*, Vol. II, Baroda, 1936, P. 169.(Now onwards HSBSR).

Nadiad *parganas* around 1766.[128] It is seen that in cases where the *desai* himself was a *kamavisdar* he enjoyed absolute authority in revenue collection. In Kapadvanj *pargana* the price of grains had risen during the year 1813-14. Rajaram, the *desai*, who was also the *kamavisdar* of Kapadvanj at this time, changed the mode of revenue collection from cash to kind.[129]

The rights (*haq*) of the *desai*[130] consisted of 2.5% of the total revenue collection, together with *pasaitu* and *jeewuk*, which was in lieu of the services that he performed. *pasaitu* revenue free land while *jeewuk* was realized in cash.[131] Both these rights were hereditary and greatly valued. In addition to these a *desai* also received *nazrana* from residents of villages. He was also *sukhdi*, possibly a perquisite in cash, since it was deducted from the *jama*. *Sukhdi* was collected by the *desai*s, *kamavisdar*s, *amin*s and such other superior land right holders.[132] The *desai*s who held lands on *ijara* were given an additional allowance in cash called *inam*. Also, the *desai*s who paid *giras* to the *girasia*s on behalf of the state also received a present from the *girasia*s called *cheerda* for the timely payment of the amount. Besides these, the *desai*s also enjoyed a number of other perquisites. A *desai* who was also the *kamavisdar* was exempt from *rahdari* (transit dues) in his area of jurisdiction. He also exercised rights over

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128 *HSBSR-I*, P. 115.

129 Ibid. P.234.

130 For the position and role of *Desais* in Gujarat, see B.R. Grover, *The Position of Desai in the Pargana administration of Subah Gujarat*, PIHC, Delhi, 1961.

131 Jaspal Kaur Dhot, op, cit., P. 236.

132 Ibid. Pp. 238-239.

artisans and professionals such as the potters, brick makers, etc who supplied their articles of trade or manufacture free or at a concessional rate to him.[133] It was largely as a result of control of the resources at the local level that with the passage of time the *desai*s became powerful at those levels. Hence, by the end of the 18th century in Kapadwanj, the *desai*s held 1,259 *bigha*s of land in *pasaitu*; in the fertile tracts of Petlad 2,782 *bigha*s; 3,200 *bigha*s in Matar *pargana*;[134] in Bharuch *pargana* 36,563 *bigha*s,[135] and in Ankleshwar *pargana* it was 8,517 *bigha*s.

There is evidence to suggest that the *desai*s invested their income in various commercial activities. Many *desai*s had emerged as retailers, bankers and Shroffs, through money lending, *manotidari*, etc. For instance, Amin Bhai Bhagwan Das *Desai* of Mahudha *pargana*, Anandram Sewakram and Jalalchand, the *desai*s of *pargana* Matar had emerged as bankers having their agencies in the major towns of Gujarat and Malwa. Besides lending money and dealing in *hundis*, they also undertook trade activities. They brought cloth and opium from Malwa and sold them to retailers in the villages, while they sold produce of the countryside in the towns.[136]

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133 Ibid. P.242

134 Ibid. P.235

135 Rajkumar Hans, *Agrarian Economy of Broach district during the first half of the 19th century*, unpublished Ph.D dissertation, M.S. University, 1987, P. 74.

136 Jaspal Kaur Dhot, op, cit., P. 241.

B. R. Grover has thrown sufficient light on the nature of the *desaigiri* right in Gujarat in an important study.[137] He notes that the office of *desai* could not be identified with any of the known offices such as of the *patwari*, *muqaddam*, *chaudhri*, *qanungo*, *shiqdar*, etc. [138] However, both the *desai* and the *chaudhri* were primary land right holders and their titles entitled them to enjoy certain additional rights. Some of their duties and functions were also similar. Just as the *chaudhri* was entitled to *nankar*, the *desai* was entitled to *pasaitu*, suggesting that *pasaitu* was the local term for *nankar*. Both the *chaudhri* and the *desai* were held responsible for the assessment of revenue (*jamabandi*) in the area under their charge and to endeavour to enlarge the area of cultivation and look after the welfare of the *riaya*.[139]

IJARA

The institution of *ijara* had been prevalent in the Mughal Empire from the 17th century. In Gujarat also we have the evidence of the same. The existence *ijara* in the port towns of Surat and Cambay has been brought to light through a recent study.[140] The institution of *ijara* during the 17th century was highly regulated. However, during the 18th century we find not only an increase in the incidence of *ijara*,

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137 B.R. Grover, op.cit.

138 Ibid. P.150.

139 Compare the functions of *chaudhri* in N.A.Siddiqui, *Land Revenue Administration under the Mughals*, New Delhi, 1989, p: 90-91 with the functions of *Desais* in B.R.Grover, op.cit.

140 Farhat Hasan, *op.cit.*

but also dilution of principles governing this practice. In Gujarat during this period, *ijara* became an instrument of aggrandizement of wealth and resources and thus its holders played an important role in the emerging power structure in the region.

During our period of study the sources of revenue as well as various offices were held on *Ijara.* The office of Naib-Nazim and Naib-Faujdar were let out to individuals on *ijara.* Such a practice was necessitated as a single person held many offices simultaneously during this period. Such a person had to appoint his *Naib* to look after the duties of his offices that he was unable to supervise personally. The *Naib* held the charge on *ijara.* Mirat-ul-Haqa'iq contains useful information on farming of offices during the 18th century Gujarat. In 1719 for instance, Amir-ul-Umrah Hasan Ali Khan was appointed as *mutasaddi* of Surat, who in turn farmed out the office to one Shaikh-ul-Islam on the payment of ten lakh rupees and made him his *Naib.*[141] Rustam Ali Khan similarly paid ten lakhs for the office of Mutsaddi of Surat.[142] Sher Khan Babi was similarly given the *ijara* of the *faujdari* of Junagadh in 1730 for Rs. 80,000[143] and later in 1740 Hizabar Khan gave the office of *faujdari* of Junagadh to Mir Dost Ali Khan and Sadiq Khan jointly.[144] Momin Khan I gave *ijara* of the post of Naib-

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141 *Mirat-ul-Haqaiq,* f.149 (a).
142 Ibid.f.269 (a).
143 *Tarikh-i-Sorath,*P.134.
144 Ibid. P.139.

mutsaddi of the port of Cambay to Fida-ud-din Khan along with the *ijara* of chorasi *pargana*.[145]

The *faujdar*s were also given *ijara* of revenues of *pargana*s under their charge. This helped them in entrenching themselves locally. As already seen, Sher Khan Babi, by virtue of having held the *ijara* of Junagadh for many years, was recalled at the instance of the *ryots* of the region to replace Hizabar Khan as the *faujdar* of Junagadh. Sher Khan, the *faujdar*, was responsible for establishing the Babi Nawabi at Junagadh. Similarly, Jawan Mard Khan, the *faujdar* of Patan held the *ijara* of Patan, Vijapur, Kheralu and other places. He laid the foundations of the Nawabi of Radhanpur. Momin Khan, the *faujdar* of Cambay, held the *ijara* of *pargana*s Cambay Petlad, Arhar Matar, and other areas around Cambay. He later established the *nawabi* of Cambay. Rustam Ali Khan was given the *ijara* of *peshkash* from the smaller wanta holders on the river Vatrak and Mundah.[146] With the rise of Shuja'at Khan as the Naib-Nazim in the Subah, he was the given the *ijara* of Dholka, Haveli *pargana* Ahmadabad, Bharuch, Jambusar, Maqbulabad (Amod), Bulsar and Kadi *pargana*.[147]

With the Marathas taking over larger territories in the region, they introduced the *kamavisdari* system, which was an

145 *Mirat*, P. 482.
146 *Mirat*, P. 412.
147 *Mirat*, P. 416.

institutionalized form of *ijara*. The Marathas gave three types of *ijaras*: *Maqta*, *kutcha* and *istawa*. In *maqta* a *kamavisdar* was to pay a fixed amount as *rasad*[148], or advance, consisting of half the amount of the *jama'*. If he, subsequently, suffered any legitimate loss in the revenue collection, he would get a remission in revenue after investigation. If he collected more than the stipulated amount, he was entitled to keep that to himself. In *kutcha* the *kamavisdar* was obliged to pay to government whatever he collected, after deducting all incurred expenses. In this case he received a fixed salary. In case of *istawa*, revenue demand was fixed on an ascending scale. This practice was adopted for places where agriculture had suffered due to some reasons and it needed to be rehabilitated.[149] The collection of *Chauth* was also let out on *Ijara,* such an *ijaradar* being known as *chauthia.*

The British in the 18th Century too resorted to *ijaradari* (revenue farming). Besides the land revenue, the customs belonging to the East India Company at Bhavnagar was farmed out. We have figures for the year 1777. Out of four bidders, Nasservanji Bomanji and Bocundas Mohandas, the highest bidders, were given *ijara* of Bhavnagar (Rs. 10,125/-) and Mahuwa, a port of lesser importance in the kingdom of Bhavnagar, (Rs. 1,126/-), respectively.[150] Towards the

148 *Rasad* consisted of two parts: one paid in advance at the time of taking the *ijara* of the place. It used to be generally in Ashvin Shud (October). The other part called *kharaj rasad* was paid at year end or end of the *ijara* contract., J.H.Gense and D.R.Banaji (ed), *TheGaekwads of Baroda-English Documents,* Vol: V, Bombay, (Now onwards GOB), Pp.156 & 165-166.

149 N.A.Siddiqui, op.cit., Pp. 92-101; Jaspal. Kaur. Dhot, op.cit.,P. 289.

150 G.W.forrest (ed), *Selections from the Letters, Despatches and other State Papers*, Home Series, Vol. I, Surat, 4th April 1777, P. 394.

end of the Century the British also wanted to take *ijara* of Gaekwad *chauth* in Surat so as to resolve frequent disputes over revenue sharing between the Nawab of Surat and the Marathas.[151] The factors at Surat gave the *chaukis* (*thanas*) in Valsad districts on *ijara* for six months at the rate of Rs. 5,ooo per month around 1780. [152] Presumably other *chaukis* were also given on *Ijara.*

The practice of *ijara* gave rise to *manotidari*, the sub-farming of revenues, and employment of *marfatias* in revenue collection machinery. Manoti means financial surety and was given in two places. As mentioned earlier, upon obtaining the *ijara* a *kamavisdar* had to pay half of the assessed revenue in advance known as *rasad* to the government. For this the shroffs or merchants (Parekhs) advanced him the required amount of money for which they charged interest called as *manoti.* The rates of *manoti* depended on the amount advanced and it also differed from place to place. Secondly, the needful ryots took loans from wealthy individuals, usually a *desai,* either for revenue payment or for the purchase of cattle, seeds, etc (*taqavi*). In this case the *manoti* could be as high as 25%.[153] In addition to that, the village had to maintain a *havaldar* or a *mehta* (scribe) on behalf of the *manotidar.*[154] Very often the surety holders abused their position and usurped the produce of land or the land of

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151 G.S.Sardesai (ed), *Poona Residency correspondence, vol:II, Malet's Embassy*, Bombay, 1936, P.320.

152 *GOB III*, P. 60.

153 *Walker-Selections XXXIX*, Pp. 26-27.

154 Ibid. Pp.40-41

the farmers itself.[155] In case of the *ijaradari* and *manotidari* combining in the same individual or group, it led to greater hold over the *ryots*. This was especially true of the *Qasbati*s of Dholka.[156]

SECURITIES

The practice of securing security of someone for good conduct was an old one. Under the Mughals the erring *zamindar*s and *malguzar*s had to furnish security of a reliable person for the timely regular and payment of land revenue. In Gujarat, the *Nazim*s regularly sought securities from recalcitrant *ryots* and *zamindar*s such as the *kolis*. We also find the members of the *bhat* community standing as securities. It is suggested that even Todar Mal also favoured the *bhats* as security holders in Gujarat. The *bhat*s and *charan*s in Gujarat were the traditional genealogists who maintained the histories of the native Gujarati chiefs. They were held in high reverence throughout the region without exception.

Since the earliest times the *bhats* functioned as guides and provided security to the travelers and merchants passing through the areas of the refractory Zamindar. A good description of this is given by a 16th Century a Turkish traveler, who wrote:

155 Ibid. Pp. 26-27
156 Ibid. Pp. 39-40.

"In Gujarat there is a tribe of Bamiano called Bhats, who warrant the safe conveyance of merchants and travelers from one country to another for a stipulated sum of money. If the Rajputs meet the caravan with the intention of robbing them the bhats would draw their daggers and threaten to kill themselves if the least harm should happen to the caravan. The Rajputs then let the caravan pass unmolested. But if it suffers the least damage the Bhats kill themselves and if they did not, they would lose their honour and never afterwards be respected. Of on the contrary, they devote themselves for the sake of caravans the Rajputs are judged guilty of death and are executed by their Reis together with their whole families. Two Bhats were sent to attend us".[157]

During the 18th Century the role of the *bhat*s and that of the *charan*s, became more important in the context of the prevailing conditions of insecurity. Therefore, no monetary transaction was considered safe unless it involved a strong security on both sides, assuring the fair performance of the stipulated terms by both the sides. This system of security seeking was known in Gujarat as *bandheri.*[158] Securities were sought in all transactions, of both public and private nature. Since the beginning of the century, as a safeguard against the harassment by the Imperial officers, prominent citizens and the general public insisted on seeking security of a reliable person for

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157 Statement of Sidhi Ali Kapudan who visited Gujarat in 1553. *Translations of Literary Society- Bombay-II.* P 9. C.f., Campbell (ed), *Bom.Pre.Gaz.Population- Hindus,* op.cit., footnote-1, P. 210.

158 *Bandheri* is a term mentioned in the Mirat. Alexander Walker, on the other hand calls it *Bhandari.*

good behavior by the officers. There are instances cited in the *Mirat* which shows that sometimes powerful officers tried to violate their securities; sometimes they were successful, sometimes they were not. Here is the case of Ganga Das, a wealthy silk merchant of Ahmedabad who was made the *Nagarsheth* of Ahmadabad by Mubariz-ul-Mulk. Upon Maharaja Abhay Singh's assumption of *Nizamat,* he furnished the security of Abhay Karan Singh to Ganga Das. Abhay Karan Singh, the son of Durga Das Rathod was well known in the region and was a confidante of the *Nazim.* The Nagarsheth therefore felt relaxed and regarded himself safe from the exactions of the *Nazim.* However, the Nazim secured an Imperial order for imprisonment of the Nagarsheth on false charges of misappropriation of money. Subsequently, he arrested the Nagarseth and escheated the wealth belonging to him and also imposed fines on people associated with the silk industry of Ahmadabad. Abhay Karan Singh's reputation was greatly tarnished since he could not honour the security.[159] Another incident, also mentioned before is that of Ratan Singh Bhandari, the *Naib-Nazim* who had sought to seize the wealth of Bhau Singh, the wealthy *Desai* of Viramgam. The Naib-*Nazim* could not be successful because there was an active resistance from the surety holders. Jawan Mard Khan, the *faujdar* of Viramgam had to be replaced by Sher Khan Babi as a measure to pacify the securities.[160]

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159 *Mirat,* Pp. 487-488
160 Ibid. Pp. 512-513.

As seen above, only that individual or party could undertake to provide security that had the capability to enforce the terms of agreement. In case of the *Bhats* and Charans it was the socio-religious reverence attached to them that rendered them most capable of such an undertaking. The social position of the *bhat*s can be gauged from the fact that no sale-deed or transaction was considered valid unless it was countersigned by a *bhat*. *Kolis*, *bhils* and Rajputs all respected a Bhat security.[161] In case of a breach of agreement by either of the parties, a Bhat could force him to fulfill his terms by resorting to the practice of *dharna* and *traga*. *Dharna* was the practice where a Bhat would collect men from his caste and sit before the residence of the person not fulfilling the stipulated terms of the agreement. The Bhat would not leave the place unless the person complied. In case of *traga* the Bhat would go a step further and either inflicts injures on his person or kill a member of his own family. The most extreme step he would resort to would be to commit suicide in front of the house of the defaulter. Suicide by a *bhat* was most dreaded by the people as it was considered that a *bhat*'s soul will not get salvation and it will leave a curse who one who forced such an action. It seems that the practice of *traga* was not confined to *Bhats* alone but even some Brahmins practiced it.[162]

During the 18th century, a Bhat was also considered to be a connecting link between the Mewasi population and the Maratha

161 James Campbell (ed), *Bom.Pres.Gaz. Population-Hindus,* op.cit., Pp. 209-210
162 Ibid. P. 311

government.[163] Charans could stand security of large amounts running in lakhs of rupees. The Rajputs preferred the surety of a *bhat* over that of the wealthiest banker.[164]

The moral authority wielded by the *bhat* was utilized by various parties to settle contentious issues. During the 18th Century various polities trying to garner maximum resources put extravagant demands on the peasantry which the latter was unable to pay. Sometimes the peasantry refused to give even the legitimate amount of revenue to the authorities. In such cases, the *bhats* interceded on behalf of the peasantry with the authorities and worked out a mutually agreed sum and stood surety for the same before the authorities. Such a role played by the *bhat* was mutually advantageous both to the *ryots* and to the authorities. The Qasbatis of Dholka also were known to perform these duties.

The security of the *bhats* was also sought, when, at the time of maturity of crop, the *patel* of the village asked the *kamavisdar* to issue the permission slip for harvesting. The *bhats* had to stand as sureties at this point of time for not allowing the ryots to reap the harvest without the permission of the *kamavisdar* and also ensure that the harvested crop is not taken away by stealth.[165] The extent of trust kept in the *Bhats* is exhibited in the fact that the sub leasing of the

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163 Walter Hamilton,op.cit., P. 609.
164 *Bom.Pres.Gaz. Population-Hindus*, op. cit., P.217.
165 *Walker-Selections XXXIX*, P. 5.

uncultivated and depopulated lands of a villages by the Kamavisdar did not involve any written order, instead a Bhat security was considered enough to confirm the agreement.[166] When the Marathas started collecting *khandani* (tribute) in their *mulkgiri* expeditions in Gujarat, they also insisted on someone standing surety for the *khandani* to be paid by the chieftains. This system was in vogue in Saurashtra and the Mewasi sections of North Gujarat comprising the divisions of Mahi-Kantha and Rewa Kantha.[167] Alexander Walker has listed the following six kinds of Securities.[168]

a. 'Fail Zamin' or 'Chaloo Zamin' meant for securing the good behavior of the subordinate chiefs.
b. 'Hazar Zamin' or security for personal appearance.
c. 'Mahal Zamin' was the security for Money, Property or Revenue.
d. 'Lila Zamin' was permanent, literally eternal. This was also the security for good Behaviour but more binding and solemn.
e. 'Arr (ad) Zamin' was additional security.
f. The sixth security was called 'Ootkhand Mahadev'. This was resorted to in extreme cases. It was a solemn invocation in which the Bhat undertaking the security bound himself most

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166 Ibid. P. 25.

167 *Kantha* in Gujarati means a river bank. Mahi Kantha was the area on the river Mahi and Rewa Kantha was the Banks of Narmada. These areas were inhabited by the Koli Zamindars who were largely recalcitrant and force was required to collect revenues from them. These areas were officially referred to as *Mewasi* by the Marathas, meaning recalcitrant.

168 *Walker- Selections XXXIX*, P. 36.

securely. It was exacted from only the most refractory of the Mewasis.

In addition to the above, *sankla zamin* or connected security was also taken. It means the security given by a chief for the conduct of the chief of his adjoining territory, thus forming a chain of securities, making them responsible for each other.[169] This was resorted to by the British East India Company in the revenue settlements of Saurashtra and Mahi Kantha.

An instance showing the important position the Bhat security had come to hold is recorded in the English sources. It is a conversation between Takhtabai, the favourite wife of Anand Rao Gaekwad and Gangadhar Shastri, the *karbhari* of the British Residency at Baroda, in 1803. Takhtabai was accused of intriguing to oust the British Resident from Baroda.

"... **(Takhta) Bai:** *What is desired?*

Shatri: *You must plainly disclose the transactions lately passed; again you must give the security of some person possessed of two lakhs of Rupees. (To gain freedom)*

169 Ibid. P.98.

Bai: *How can a woman find a money security against inimical Intrigues, who has been once accused of them?*

Shastri: *What security then will you give?*

Bai: *I will give that of a Bhat.*

Shastri: *What can a poor Bhat do, if you, Bai should unfortunately fall again amid the foes?*

Bai: *It is true in a temporal light the Bhats are poor. But, if I failed in my engagements, a Bhat would bring a thousand of his order and shed their blood before my face, cursing and upbraiding; which much I would fear. Therefore this security may be taken with the fullest confidence.*

Shastri: *A Bhat has nothing. How can you offer such security?*

Bai: *All over Gujarat the Bhats stand securities for Lakhs of Rupees, do they not? And the object, for which he pledges himself, is fulfilled from the fear that he else would shed his blood; so you must take Bhat Jamin ..."* [170]

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[170] *GOB VI*, P. 77.

Later the *Zamin* of Vishwaram Bhat was given by Takhta Bai.

Major Alexander Walker had given a detailed account of the practice of securities in Baroda under the Gaikwads in the late 18th century. It mainly relates to the engagements between the Gaikwad chief and his subjects. He further informs that every transaction of the government was secured by a *Bhandari;* that its use pervades every department of the Government and continues in chain downwards through its subjects in all the transactions of any consequence. These subjects were the Arab *jamadars* and some other principal military officers. In this capacity the Arab *jamadars* had every right to interfere in the activities of the government. This in turn increased their influence and power.[171]

The term *Bhandari* seems to be derivation from Sanskrit 'Bahu' meaning a hand and 'Dherda', to place or to seize.[172] There were Securities safeguarding the property as well as persons. In case of a crime having been committed by the person having a security, the security giver was taken into confidence by the administration before proceeding to deal with that person.[173] No *koli* would go out of his village without a security. In some cases security was also sought from the chief of a place before an individual, may be a merchant,

171 Ibid. Pp. 146-147.
172 Ibid. Pp. 147-150.
173 Ibid.

took up his residence there.[174] In case of property also the government could not abuse the party having security, unduly.

The power which the security giver enjoyed and how the company expanded its influence in the domestic affairs of the Gaekwad Government because of it being a security holder, is explained by Alexander Walker in the following words:

" *...Generally speaking and considering the extensive power conferred by giving a Bhandari, which necessarily implies a power of enforcing a due performance of the obligation and the control acquired thereby in many important affairs of the Govt, it may rather be considered as a beneficial engagement, and the risk must be trifling...*

In fact a Bhandari is very seldom or never broken. It is the support of a weak Government, and a breach would threaten a dissolution of it. From what has been said the Bhandari will be found to have many advantages. In the case of substitution of the Company's for the Arab Bhandari, the Hon'ble Company became possessed of a very extensive influence and at the same time deprived the Gaekwad sardars of a powerful means by which they derived a right of controlling their Governments...

174 Ibid.

It also affords another mode of extending the Company's influence; for, as the Bhandari on their side is perfectly disinterested and gratuitous, it must be considered as an act of condescension and favour, and establishes a connection with the Moneyed men, which the company have reaped much benefit from in their pecuniary transactions in Baroda."[175]

While the East India Company undertook to disband the Arab Sibandis from the Gaekwad's principality, the Gaekwad had to take enormous amounts of loans from both the Company and other Shroffs, to make payments of arrears of pay to the *Sibandi*s. In this case also the Company stood guarantee to see to it that the districts allotted by the Gaekwad for the repayment of the said loans to the Shroffs will be used for that purpose only.[176] On discharge of the Arab *jamadars,* their security responsibilities were taken over by the Company.[177] The East India Company considered this security system as the basis of their relationship with the native rulers of this region which gave 'almost unlimited powers' to interfere in the internal administration of the Gaekwads.[178] The Revenue Settlement agreements undertaken by the Company with the various principalities of Saurashtra and North-eastern Gujarat were also in the nature of the Securities.

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175 Ibid.
176 GOB VII, pp. 146-147.
177 G.S.Sardesai (ed), *Poona Residency Correspondence,* Vol. 13, *Elphinstone's Embassy,* Bombay, 1958, Lt.12, Pp. 55-60.
178 Ibid.

The business of security holding was a source of great income to its holders. The *bhats* and *charans* were able to maintain large droves of carriages of cattle, which they used for inland trading in grain and other commodities.[179] Also they acted as money lenders and as pawnbrokers.[180] We have the evidence of Jambusar where the *charans* were holding large chunks of revenue free land and other pieces of land acquired through mortgage or purchase.[181] The Qasbatis of Dholka were also benefitted because of their acting as security holders.[182] The East India Company used this practice as a tool to enhance its position and role in the region. Such possessions augmented their resources and provided them further means to strengthen their economic and political position.

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179 Walter Hamilton, op,cit., P. 610.

180 *Bom.Pres. Gaz,* vol.IV, Ahmadabad, 1879, P.38.

181 Thomas Marshall, 'A Statistical Account of the Pargana of Jambusar', 26th Dec, 1820, in *The Transactions of the Literary Society of Bombay,* Vol: III, 1823, P. 377.

182 *Bom.Pres. Gaz- Ahmadabad,* op.cit., P. 148

RISE OF BRITISH POLITICAL POWER IN GUJARAT

The English East India Company had existed pervasively as a merchant body at Surat during the 17th Century along with the Dutch. During Shivaji's attack on Surat the English chief and factors played a notable part in both safeguarding their own factory as well as providing protection to the people who sought it. The English East India Company also obtained trading concessions from Aurangzeb for their resistance to Maratha attacks. In the new power structure that emerged in Gujarat in the 18th century, the British East India Company perhaps derived the maximum benefit. The involvement of the English East India Company in the affairs in Surat, in subsequent years, helped them establish their political authority over the entire region.

The breakdown of the law and order situation in Gujarat had severe repercussions on the region. One of them was the loosening of the Mughal Imperial administrative control on big merchants as also the various East India Companies. They could obtain big concessions in the payment of the custom duties and other benefits by becoming players in the political tussle going on between various contenders to power. They were in a position to play one party against the other as they commanded material means. This was perhaps experienced in Surat more than any other place of the region. There were rapid

changes in the politics in Surat, brought about by ambitious elements, most of who were linked to commerce. Most notable amongst them were Mullah Mohammad Ali and Ahmad Chelabi. These elements were motivated by commercial interests in siding with one political faction or the other at Surat. It was this attempt to control the political powers to enhance their wealth that also prompted the English and the Dutch East India Companies to enter the political scene of Surat.

The design of the English East India Company seems to have been to enhance the Company's trade prospects vis-à-vis the others by creating monopolies. This was clearly evident in the phase following the British control of the Surat castle after which the *Nawab* remained merely in name. The British attempted and largely succeeded in undermining the trade of the other East India Companies, Dutch and the French as also the big Indian merchants like the Chellabis.[183] However, in the course of time the Bombay Presidency's need to augment its resources for its maintenance and the competition offered by the other two Presidencies seems to have had an overriding influence on the activities of the English in Gujarat. The conquest of Bharuch should be seen in this light. Bharuch was considered strategically important and rich in resources so needed by the Presidency. By the time of the 'Raghoba affair' (First Anglo-Maratha War)[184], the political complexion at the pan-India level had changed.

183 The design of the English Company to monopolize the trade of Surat is mentioned by non-English travelers.V.G.Hatalkat (ed), *French Records relating to the History of the Marathas*, Vol.I, Bombay, 1978, P.3 & 71-72; Splinter Stavorinus, transl. Samuel Hull Wilcocke, *Voyages to the East Indies*, Vol. III, London, 1798, P. 59.

184 This happened in 1775. The Raghoba Affair has been described in detail in the

The English East India Company had emerged as a power of significance in the midst of the triangular conflict between the Marathas, Hyder Ali and the English in the southern and western India.

The English possessions consisted of directly administered areas and Princely States. Surat was the first place to be conquered by the Company followed by Bharuch, as mentioned above. These were directly administered areas. With the acceptance of British hegemony in 1802-03 by the Anand Rao, the Gaekwad Chief of Baroda, the British were able to gain a definite standing in the region, something they had failed to achieve during the First Anglo-Maratha War.

We have traced in the following pages the account of expansion of British power in Gujarat starting from Surat, Bharuch and Baroda to Kathiawad and Kutch and to the regions of Mahi-Kantha and Rewa-Kantha. By 1817-1818, the British had gained a complete mastery of Gujarat, as after the defeat of Baji Rao II, the office of Peshwa was abolished and all his territories also came under the British control.

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subsequent pages.

CONQUEST OF SURAT

As seen earlier, since the beginning of the century the Maratha expansion in Gujarat had disrupted its economic and social life. The main brunt of their activities was taken by Surat, especially its *parganas*, the Surat *atthavisi*. The *parganas* were agriculturally rich. Immediate to the death of Rustam Ali Khan, the Marathas occupied the whole of the countryside. The successors of Rustam could hardly check the rapid advance of the Marathas. They were busy in the factional struggle for the office of the *mutasaddi* whose authority was restricted to the control of the town only. Subsequent developments only worsened the situation. The merchant prince Mohammad Ali ousted Sohrab Khan, (also known as Behram Khan), son of Rustam, from the office of the *mutasaddi*. Mohammad Ali had the support of the Dutch and the English East India Companies. Teg Beg Khan (also known as Teg Bakht Khan) was appointed the *mutasaddi*. Mohammad Ali considered Teg Beg Khan a pliable candidate. However, Teg Beg Khan could disentangle himself from Mohammad Ali's control and got him assassinated.[185]

[185] Mulla Mohammad Ali succeeded to the fortunes of his grandfather Mulla Abdul Jafar in 1719. In 1729 he attempted to establish a settlement on piram islands and later at Athwa at the expense of Surat's revenues. Sohrab Khan stopped him because of which Mohammad Ali got Sohrab Khan replaced with Teg Bakht Khan. Sohrab Khan was ousted from Surat. Later Mohammad Ali attempted to get an imperial sanad in the name of his son thus aiming to merge his wealth with political power. However Teg Bakht Khan got Mohammad Ali imprisoned and assassinated in prison in 1732 and Mohammad Ali thus ceased to play any part in Surat's politics. *Bom. Pres. Gaz, Vol.II, Surat & Broach*, Bombay, 1877, Pp.110-111.

After getting rid of Mahammad Ali, Teg Bakht Khan's administration was free from outside interference and he could maintain order and establish his sole authority over the whole town. Teg Beg Khan assumed the title of *Nawab*. Before him, the two officers, the *Mutasaddi* and the *Qilledar* were appointed by Mughal Imperial authority. However, Teg Bakht Khan after becoming the *mutasaddi* appointed his brother Beglar Khan to the office of *Qilledari*, without seeking consent of local Mughal authority. Another brother, Safdar Khan similarly was appointed as Naib for the police and other administrative duties. [186] As the countryside had come into the possession of the Marathas and the *Nawab* was unable to oust them, he entered into an agreement with Damaji Rao Gaekwad in 1735, whereby a yearly amount of Rs.2, 36,000 was to be given by the Marathas after collecting the revenues around Surat.[187]

The relations of the English East India Company were always strained with the *Nawab/Mutasaddi* since the times of Rustam Ali Khan. It continued to be so under Sohrab Khan and Teg Bakht Khan as well. The main source of contention seems to have been the repeated demands of *Peshkash* made by the *Nawab* who was always hard-pressed for resources.[188] In the change of administration after Mohammad Ali's assassination in 1733, Henry Lowther, the English chief at Surat was known to have played an active role. This gave the

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186 Ibid. P.116.

187 Ibid. P.117.

188 Surat Factory Diary, Letter from Bombay, 30th May 1725, C.f. Commissariate, op, cit., Vol. III. Pp.520-521.

Surat factory a political position in the local politics. The English now became politically ambitious.

The British made three attempts to gain a political foothold in Surat: in 1735, 1751-52 and 1758-59. In 1735 the British ambition in Surat was limited to obtaining the control of the *tanka* or the admiralty of the Surat port. This was a post created by Aurangzeb in 1687 after the conquest of Bijapur. He assigned the post to the Sidis of Janjira (Danda-Rajpuri). The function of this office was to guard the Surat coast against the pirates and thereby safeguard the sea-borne trade. This post carried with it a salary of Rs. 3 lacs Per annum. Immediate to the assumption of power by Teg Beg Khan, the English at Surat demanded that they be transferred the charge of *tanka* from the Sidis. The English considered the *Nawab* as obliged to them for their support in bringing him to office. The English did not resort to violence but adopted the peaceful means. They accordingly commenced negotiations with the *Nawab* from 7th June lasting till 31st July.[189] However, the *Nawab* did not acknowledge the English claim. He was desirous of coveting a part of the salary of the *tanka* for himself by keeping the Sidi in charge. The *Nawab* seems to have perceived the Sidi as a pliable candidate. The English on the other hand demanded the whole income since they were strong enough to enforce it. The failure of these negotiations led to friction between the two. The *Nawab* also ill-treated some of the Company dependants. Under this pretext the English chief left the town with his factors and

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[189] "The Nawabship of Teg Beg Khan at Surat" in *Bomaby Quarterly Review*, Vol. IV, Bombay, 1856, P.193.

went on board their Ships at the mouth of the river Tapi. He drew a formal statement of grievances demanding redress and threatened with reprisals on Surat trade. The terms included protection according to the charter of 1716; that their boats should not be molested and their dependants, those who were ill-treated, were to be compensated.[190] The *Nawab*, in answer, placed guards over the factory and forbade Indian merchants from trading with them. He also gave his own set of demands to the English. He accused the English of evading duties on the private trade under cover of exemption granted only to the company's goods.[191] The English, on the other hand, repelled an attack made by the Sidi and blockaded the mouth of the river Tapi. It was from this river that the goods used to come into the town from the sea. This blockade continued for one full year and the provisions of the town had risen to 40%.[192] In February 1735 the *Nawab* finally ordered the removal of the guards from the Factory and the Indians were permitted to trade with the English. The relations between the two continued to be sour.

It seems the English factors at Surat were rebuked by their superiors for their interference in the politics of the place, for we find the factors writing in 1741:

"Our business goes on without impediment and we hope it will not be otherwise, as we shall only confine ourselves to our own sphere and not the least interfere with any transactions relative to

190 Ibid, p. 197.
191 Ibid, Pp. 197-198.
192 Ibid, Pp. 200-202.

government further than supporting your honour's privileges when called in question".[193]

It was not until 1751-52 that the English became politically active again. By then the situation had changed much. In 1746 Teg Beg Khan died leading to a spate of succession wars. In 1747 Safdar Khan, Teg Beg Khan's brother succeeded him and Waqar Khan, Safdar's son became the *Qilledar*. However, a year later Mian Achhind, Son-in-law to Teg Beg Khan defeated the father-son duo and took the *Nawab*i under his control. He had the support of his wealthy mother-in-law known as 'Begum'. It seems that the British helped Mian Achhind in ousting Safdar Khan from Surat.

By 1750-51 the *Nawab* had failed to pay the *tanka* fee of Rs.3 lacs per annum to the Sidi of Janjira, for some time. Therefore, he sent some cruisers (ships) into the river Tapi at a time when the monsoon was setting in. Under the pretence of monsoon, the ships remained at Surat and the *Nawab* was unaware of their real intentions. The commander of the squadron, Sidi Masud, took this opportunity to seize the castle. Immediate to this development many of the Acchind's dissatisfied officers viz., the former slaves of Teg Bakht Khan who had been freed by him prior to his death and who also had much wealth and power in the *darbar*, joined the Sidi faction. Two of Achhind's other important officers also joined the Sidi.[194]

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193 *Bomaby Quarterly review*, op.cit., P. 220.
194 *GOB- I*, P.74.

The event which brought about another change of administration at Surat was as follows: Mian Achhind and Ali Nawaz Khan, his cousin and Custom-Master at Surat had fallen-off. Mian Achhind ordered Ali Nawaz Khan to leave the town and confiscated his wealth including horses and other assets. Ali Nawaz Khan instead took shelter with the Sidi.[195] This strengthened the Sidi's position. The Sidi retaliated on behalf of Ali Nawaz Khan by bringing Ali Nawaz's possessions into the town walls forcibly. This show of strength by Sidi so alarmed the *Nawab* that he started preparations for battle. He also invited the Marathas to his aid.

Meanwhile the merchants were apprehensive that this fresh bout of violence would bring the *Ganim* (Marathas) into a greater share of power in the administration of the town. They therefore approached the English Chief to arbitrate between the *Nawab* and the Sidi, which the English accepted after much deliberation. In the negotiations it was said that the *Nawab* would not bring in the Marathas provided Ali Nawaz Khan left the place. After much pressure was exerted the Sidi only promised to 'neither encourage him (Ali Nawaz Khan) to stay nor oppose his going'.[196] Ali Nawaz did not go. The merchants were desirous that the English should assist Mian Achhind and the merchants would defray the charges (as they were apprehensive that the Ganims would take over the control of the town). The chief declined the offer.[197]

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195 Ibid.
196 Ibid. Pp. 74-75.
197 Ibid.

However, because of the greater involvement of the Dutch in support of the Sidi and the news of this party's designs to bring back Safdar Khan as *Nawab* of Surat made the English factors uncomfortable. The Sidi and Safdar Khan were also reported to have entered into a treaty with the Dutch whereby the new *Nawab* would procure a *sanad* for the Dutch entitling them to pay only Rs.10,000 annually in lieu of the customs and also to build a wharf and land all their goods there. This would have brought the Dutch at par with the English in the trade of Surat.[198] Bombay instructed the English chief at Surat to stop the Dutch from availing these privileges.[199] At this time the English chief also apprehended an attack on the English factory by the Sidi.[200]

On the other hand Mian Achhind proposed to cede the castle to the English whose revenues were Rs. 22000 with an additional 10000 from the *Nawab* for helping him against the Sidi. He also promised to cede the Sidi's *tanka,* which consisted of a fixed proportion of the customs amounting to around Rs. 1,75,000. The English servants believed this would put the English trade and Company's affairs in Surat on a very secure footing.[201] Bombay also entered into negotiations with the Peshwa, Balaji Baji Rao to secure his support in ousting the Sidi. The English at Surat still maintained that they were not interested in the politics of the place and were only defending their employer's interests. Amongst the many terms agreed were that Sidi

198 Ibid. P.78.
199 Ibid. P.80.
200 Ibid. Pp. 78-79.
201 Ibid. Pp. 80-81.

Masud Khan would be ousted from Surat, the English would have the *tanka*, Mian Achhind to be retained as the *Nawab*, the Dutch wall to be destroyed and the expenses incurred by the English was to be made good by the Surat government.[202] However it seems that the Maratha alliance was sought to neutralize the Peshwa while the English attempted to strengthen their position at Surat.[203] The English then made a pact with the *Nawab* of Bharuch also.[204]

The final battle commenced with the Sidi attacking the castle in December 1751. The Sidi gained an upper hand and blockaded the English factory from receiving provisions and the castle was handed over by Mian Achhind. The English could not prevent the castle from falling into the Sidi's hand, as the *Nawab* of Bharuch could not raise enough force in time. The matter was finally settled with the Sidi agreeing to pay two hundred thousand rupees for all expenses and damages.[205] The English gained nothing from this expedition.

This change of government brought about by the Sidi greatly enhanced his power. He not only retained the control of the castle, but also encroached upon the power of the *Nawab* and appropriated 1/3rd of the revenues for himself.[206] When Safdar Khan and his Naib Faras Khan intrigued with the Peshwa to oust Sidi Masud, he immediately

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202 Ibid. Pp.96-97.

203 An agreement was reached by the English at Surat and the Peshwa to oust the sidi from Surat. GOB I, Pp. 96-98.The Peshwa was simultaneously attempting to occupy Surat himself and was negotiating with Miyan Acchind. G.S.Sardesai (ed), *Selections from the Peshwa Daftar, no. 24 The Peshwa's Commitments on the West Coast,* Bombay, 1932, Pp. 279-280. Both wanted to stop the Sidi from gaining power.

204 *GOB I*, Pp. 97-98.

205 Ibid. P. 101.

206 Stavorinus, Vol.III, op.cit., P. 33.

replaced Faras Khan with Ali Nawaz Khan as the Naib. He also kept the right to appoint the officers to important posts at the Darbar with himself. The *Nawab* became a pawn in Sidi Masud's hands.

Sidi Masud was all-powerful at Surat till his death in 1756. Upon his death his son Ahmad Khan succeeded him. Safdar Khan also died in 1758 leading to the succession of Ali Nawaz Khan as the *Nawab*. During these 7 years i.e., from 1752 to 1759 the English chief often played the role of a negotiator between the Sidi and the merchants, although they themselves were not free from molestation by the Sidi. The Sidi probably perceived them as a threat to his power.

It should be noted that unlike the picture painted by the English factors in the limited correspondence that has been available to this study, the English did not cease to play a political role against the Sidi. Michelguglielmo Torri has shown this convincingly.[207] By 1758 Ellis, the English Chief at Surat had carefully built a plan to take over the castle of Surat. However, the Peshwa, getting news of this plan, attacked Bassein and threatened to attack Bombay itself. This immediately put a stop to all action from Bombay and the plans were halted. Following the death of Sidi Masud and Safdar Khan, the Peshwa was also observing the situation of Surat and wanted to take over the control of the place himself.[208]

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207 MichelGuglielmo Torri, "Mughal Nobles, Indian Merchants and the Beginning of the British conquest in western India: The case of Surat 1756-1759", *Modern Asian Studies*, 32, 2, 1998.

208 G.S.Sardesai, *Peshwa Daftar*, no. 24, op.cit., *passim*.

At this juncture several developments took place that made Bombay renew its quest for Surat and its conquest was relatively smoother. The arrival of Admiral Pocock (Sent to fight the French on the West coast from Fort William) at Bombay tilted the balance of the power at Surat in favour of the English. The existence of such a big force at the disposal of Bombay kept the Marathas away from the Surat politics and the Dutch were also obliged to remain passive. [209] At Surat the situation was becoming ripe for another major change. With the succession of Sidi Ahmad Khan and his reckless behaviour there was a fall-out between him and Ali Nawaz Khan. It seems that the Sidi at this time was trying to bring Mian Achhind back at Surat. He had invited Achhind's son to stay at his Castle at Surat in Nov 1758.[210] The *Nawab* therefore sought Peshwa's help to oust the Sidi. At the same time Mian Achhind, who was already under the Peshwa's patronage collected a large army and advanced upon Surat. He could capture Rander (the twin port of Surat and of lesser importance). He later conquered Surat itself from Ali Nawaz khan. With Ali Nawaz khan applying for Peshwa's help, the Peshwa tried to stop Achhind from going to Surat. He was however on the move and did not stop upon getting the instructions. The British, on their part forwarded the argument that the merchants of the city had applied for English help against the 'tyranny' of the Sidi. The English themselves were not free from abuse and monetary exactions. Besides, the people under their protection were ill-treated.[211]

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209 *Stavorinus III*, op.cit., P. 37; M.Torri, op.cit., P. 791.
210 G.S.Sardesai, *Peshwa Daftar* no. 24, op.cit., Lt. 204, Pp. 204-205.
211 *Stavorinus III*, P. 36.

John Spencer had succeeded Ellis as Surat Chief in early 1759. Immediately, two of Achhind's officers approached the English Chief requesting him to take over the castle. These officers were Sidi Jafar and Walliullah. They were both wealthy and apprehensive that their wealth could become the reason of their ruin. The condition for their support was that Faras Khan be made the *Nawab* or at least the Naib *Nawab*.[212] To ensure success in this venture the English also entered into an agreement with the Peshwa to oust the Sidi.[213] The Peshwa, on his part was keen to continue the friendly relations with Bombay in the wake of the joint Anglo-Maratha action against the forts of Underi and Vijaydurg in the Deccan and against the rebellious Angrias on the west coast.[214]

Following these arrangements the English were ready for action. The Factory Chief at Surat decided to go on-board, as on previous occasions, to make the impact felt. Although this action was predetermined they needed a pretext. Therefore a Jamadar was sent to the Sidi's Darbar to make representation of the insults that were meted out to the English. Having come to know of English plans the Sidi attempted to stop the *vakils* of the Factory, Edul and Nasserwanji, from joining the English factors on board. This was used as a pretext by the English to commence action.[215] By chance the *Nawab*'s family had just then reached Surat from Bombay via Sea-route. The chief

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212 G.W.Forrest, op.cit., Vol: II, P. 55.
213 *Stavorinus,* op.cit., Pp. 49-50.
214 G.S.Sardesai, *Peshwa Daftar*, No. 24, op.cit., passim.
215 *GOB I*,P.132.

kept his 'Zenana' on board as a security against injury to the factory and to Mr. Erskine.

Meanwhile Mian Achhind made fervent appeals to the Peshwa to take control of the city before the English do.[216] The Peshwa stayed neutral in the face of criticism of his policy from his own people.[217] On the other hand the British at Surat were waiting for reinforcements from Bombay before commencing the hostilities.[218] With the arrival of the British troops there was much alarm in the town. The Sidi detached himself from the *Nawab* and prepared to fight. Achhind was apprehensive of the English, as they would support Faras Khan instead of him. The British took possession of the outer wall. Due to the insistence of Walliullah and Sidi Jafar it was agreed to make Faras Khan the *Naib- Nawab* instead of *Nawab.* An agreement was reached between the *Nawab* and the English through which the Makai gate leading into the inner town was opened up and the British troops took control of the Castle. The Sidi threw himself at the mercy of the English without giving a fight.[219] The castle and the *tanka* passed into British hands on 5th March 1759.[220] Thus Surat became the first territorial possession of the English East India Company providing a base for their subsequent expansion in the region.

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216 G.S.Sardesai, *Peshwa Daftar* no. 24, op.cit., Lt. 230, Pp. 233-234.

217 It seems that simultaneous negotiations were being carried on by the Peshwa's officers to take over Surat town during this time as well, but the Peshwa seems to have refused to use force against the English in this instance. *Peshwa Daftar* no. 24, Lt. 234, Pp. 237-238.

218 *GOB I*, p. 137.

219 Ibid. P.150.

220 Ibid. Pp. 150-151.

CONQUEST OF BHARUCH

The pargana of Bharuch was one of the fertile *sarkar*s of Gujarat. The port town of Bharuch was an important centre of coastal and internal trade during this period. It was ruled by a *Nawab*, who owed allegiance earlier to the Nizam of Hyderabad and since the mid-century, he acquired the *sanad* from the Mughal Emperor. The countryside of Bharuch was considered very fertile and suitable for cotton production. Much of the cotton produced in this region came from this area.

Briefly let us look at the rise of Bharuch *Nawabi* before its take over by the East India Company. Following the death of Rustam Ali Khan, Pilaji Gaekwad occupied Bharuch. He could hold it only for nine months. The Qasbati[221] troops that were left to garrison it submitted the town to one Abdullah Beg, the *faujdar*, so appointed by Sarbuland Khan. In 1731 Abdullah Beg received the patronage of the Nizam and established his rule and thus became the founder of a dynasty. In 1758 Nek Nam Khan obtained a Mughal *sanad*, adopted the title of *Nawab* and freed himself from the tutelage of the Nizam.[222]

Around 1741 Damaji Gaekwad could obtain a 60% share in the revenues of the place. A Chauthia was left there to collect the share. The *Nawab*'s authority by then was confined to the town only; the *pargana*s of Ankleshwar, Hansot, Olpad, Jambusar, etc were in the

221 For a description of the *Qasbati*s see the second and sixth chapters.
222 *Mirat*, P. 730.

hands of the Marathas. In 1751 when Damaji was compelled to share his possessions with the Peshwa these *pargana*s fell in Peshwa's hands. Subsequently the *kamavisdar*s were appointed by the Peshwa.

This situation made the *Nawab*'s position vulnerable to a great extent. He was always in the danger of being eliminated by his more powerful neighbours, be it the Marathas, Peshwa and the Gaekwad, or the other *Nawab*s of Surat and Cambay. However the English East India Company proved to be the more ambitious one. The episode of British conquest of Bharuch was as sudden as it was unexpected. The British had emerged as an important power in south Gujarat by then. Bharuch was coveted because of the rich cotton growing *pargana*s. Immediate to its conquest it was also contemplated to exchange this area with Salsette, Bassein, etc.[223] The latter places supplied Bombay with its necessities and were considered to be important for its sustenance. The Peshwa was keen to have Bharuch, as it was strategically important, situated as it was between Malwa and Gujarat. The deal could not be made.

The reason for the desire to conquer Bharuch on part of the Company servants is well described by Mr. Tayler. It goes like this:

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[223] J.H.Gense and D.R.Banaji (ed), *The Third English Embassy to Poona comprising Mostyn's Diary sept' 1772-Feb' 1774and Mostyn's Letters,* Bombay, 1934, (Now onwards Mostyn's Diary), Lt. dt. 26th January, 1773, Pp. 81-83 & Ibid. Pp. 131-132.

"... Broach is the key to the rich kingdom of Gujarat where most of our Europe investment is provided, and from whence all the best cotton is brought for the consumption of India and China. Behind Gujarat lie the extensive provinces of Ajmer and Jaisalmer, which formerly took up a large quantity of our woolens and other European Commodities..."[224]

There is an ambiguity in our sources as to why the British wanted to conquer this *Nawabi*, especially in view of the fact that later Bombay Presidency tried to exchange it with other areas near Bombay. The only information that we get in this context is that around 1770 Fatehsing Rao Gaekwad attempted to even annex the revenue share of the *nawab* (left to the *nawab* as per the earlier agreement). He wanted to control Bharuch so as to stop Govind Rao Gaekwad from gaining a foothold in the region. The chief of English factory at Surat James Ryley apprehended that the Gaekwad would become more powerful in the region, if he got control of Bharuch.[225] He therefore proposed taking over Bharuch in the name of Surat *Nawab*. He also assured his higher authorities that such a step would not be questioned by the other powers since the Surat *Nawab* also was a Mughal, deriving his legitimacy from Delhi. Being in the Treaty with the Company, Bharuch could be safely entrusted to him.[226]

[224] *GOB II*, P. 108.
[225] Ibid. Pp. 2-3
[226] Ibid, Pp. 2-3.

On the basis of this advice and information the Bombay authorities authorized James Ryley to put forward a claim to the '*Furza*' (customs) of Bharuch port through the Surat *Nawab*.[227] Accordingly it was claimed that the *faujdar* of Bharuch was earlier under Surat government's authority. Nek Nam Khan appropriated this right that belonged to Surat. This dependence was supposed to have been since the last 150 years and the arrears due since last 40 years. Therefore it was asked of Muazzaz Khan to pay the arrears of the *furza* and hand over the future control of the same to the Surat *Nawab*.[228]

It seems that this claim was fictitious or at least unsupported by any strong evidence. During hey days of Mughal Empire Bharuch was placed under the jurisdiction of the *faujdar* of Surat. From Rustam Ali Khan's time Bharuch got detached from Surat.[229] Thus, the so-called right of the Surat *Nawab* was ill defined to say the least. It only served as an alibi to the British who were looking for an opportunity to take over Bharuch. They computed the Amount of arrears at the rate of Rs 70,000 per year which amounted to the total of 28 lakh rupees.

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227 Ibid,P. 3.

228 Ibid,P.4.

229 Syed Maqbool Ahmad, *A History of the Nawabs of Broach based on the Persian manuscript 'Majmua-i-Da'anish'*, Delhi, 1985, P. 170. This manuscript is a collection of letters pertaining to the Nawabs of Broach and divided into four parts. Two forms of this text has been available for this study. The first two parts has been edited and translated by Saeed Hasan. many letters from the other two parts has been translated and reproduced in the monograph entitled '*A History of the Nawabs of Broach*'. The importance of these translations as appearing in the second work can be ascertained as the original text is not known to exist in any of the repositories. The second work will now onwards be referred to as MD in HOB.

In addition to this another monetary claim was also made. This came directly from the Company. In 1764 the *Nawab* of Bharuch had entered into a treaty with Mr. Hodges whereby it was settled that the custom duties were to be paid to the *nawab* at the rate of 1½% on all goods belonging to the Company and those under the Company's protection. After two to three years to this agreement the *Nawab* arbitrarily raised the Duties to 2½ %. The amount of the difference was calculated at the rate of Rs. 1, 50, 000. Thus, the total amount of claims on the *Nawab* of Bharuch came to Rs. 30 Lakhs. The authorities at Bombay believed that this step would intimidate the *Nawab* who would then be amenable to sign the Subsidiary Treaty and come under the Company's protection.[230] The *Nawab* on the other hand refused to acknowledge both the claims and attributed the demand of the English to the instigation of the 'people of Surat'.[231] This was immediately followed by the first British expedition against Bharuch. Gambier was appointed as the Commander of the British troops. These troops first conquered the island of Talaja, a stronghold of Koli Pirates. It was a fort in the group of Islands in the Gulf of Cambay. This provided a good standpoint to land the British troops and commence action against Bharuch.[232] The troops were ordered to take the sea route in attacking Bharuch. Gambier, however, took land route disregarding the orders. The expedition failed completely and Nawab's men defeated the British troops. In the Enquiry that followed

230 *GOB II*, Pp. 4-5.
231 Ibid. P.36.
232 Ibid, Pp. 5-6.

it was noticed that the British lacked vital information on the fords of the river Narmada, the strength of *Nawab*'s army, the condition of the Fort walls, etc.[233]

To withdraw the troops completely at that juncture was thought to be disastrous to the military reputation of the Company. Therefore, Gambier persuaded Muazzaz Khan to send Lallu Das, his Diwan with two reliable persons to Surat to settle the dispute and to offer him some petty presents with a request to withdraw the English troops.[234] The *Nawab* on the other hand realized the danger of having the now politically powerful Company as an enemy and sent the said people to Surat to negotiate on his behalf. In the negotiations the English at Surat proposed that the *Nawab* should pay Rs. 45,ooo annually from the *furza*.[235] Muazzaz Khan agreed to this reluctantly on the condition that the English should take it upon themselves to realize the customs and the income from the *parganas*, deduct the expenses and take the remainder towards their demand.[236] The negotiations did not yield any positive results.

By now both the Bombay authorities and the *Nawab* were keen to reach a settlement. The Desais and the ryots were anxious of another British attack.[237] The Bombay authorities on the other hand

233 Ibid, Pp. 42-46.
234 Ibid, Pp. 19-20.
235 *MD III*, Lt.170 in *HOB*, op.cit., Pp. 69-70.
236 Ibid, Lt. no 173 in *HOB*, op.cit., P.69.
237 *GOB II*,P.15.

were reprimanded for their unjustified action.[238] Therefore a diplomatic visit was made by the *Nawab* to Bombay, on invitation. Both parties however did not trust each other. The *Nawab* made preparations to defy the English in case of a second attack. He purchased two cannons and employed some expert Portuguese musketeers from Diu. He also arranged to keep spies in the Surat factory and Bombay as well.[239] The Bombay authorities on the other hand instructed their servants, sent to fetch the *Nawab*, to make observations regarding all the important matters needed for conquest.[240] Their information was recorded minutely and used later in the second expedition. At Bombay an agreement reached whereby the *Nawab* agreed to pay an amount of Rs.4 Lakhs in response to the demand made on him. Since he did not have ready money to pay it was agreed to receive half the amount in six months and the rest the next year.[241] However things did not prove as smooth as it seemed. The *Nawab*, upon reaching Bharuch, refused to acknowledge many terms of the Agreement. He was to have provided a suitable place for setting up the English factory in Bharuch town. Once James Morley, the commercial resident, reached there, the *Nawab* refused to provide the place. He further insulted him by publicly refusing to accept the present sent to the *Nawab*. It turned out to be a big mistake on *Nawab*'s part. The Bombay authorities took the whole thing seriously and recalled Morley. The *Nawab*'s behavior, without doubt was rash but not unfounded. The problem started while the *Nawab* was in

238 Ibid, Pp. 30-31.
239 *MD III*, Lt.177 in *HOB*, Pp. 71-73.
240 *GOB II*, Pp. 42-46.
241 Ibid, P. 52.

Bombay itself. There are two set of sources here, one from the English perspective and another from *Nawab*'s perspective. According to the English sources while the *Nawab* was coming back to Bharuch form Bombay he sent his luggage under the care of his agent (*mehta*) through the land route. Although he had asked for a Maratha pass and the Bombay President had written to Poona for acquiring one, the *Nawab* did not wait for the same. It so happened that while the luggage was passing through the Maratha controlled areas near Surat, the Maratha *kamavisdar* Nagav Ram seized the luggage and imprisoned the caretaker and his men. The *Nawab* made repeated requests to the President to help him get back his men and things from the Marathas and asserted that it was according to the terms of the Agreement of protecting mutual interests.[242] But the President paid no heed. The explanation given by the English was that since the *Nawab* did not wait for the arrival of Maratha *Pass* from Poona it was not their responsibility.

The evidence from the *Nawab*i sources, however, gives a completely different version of the events. According to these sources the luggage of the *Nawab* was intercepted while it was on its way to Bombay and not while coming back as recorded in the English sources. It further informs that this party was going through the land route on the advice of the President of Bombay. The latter is also said to have desired to interfere in the matter while the *Nawab* was at Bombay itself but was stopped by the *Nawab* who did not want to

[242] Ibid, Pp. 67-68.

create hostilities between the Peshwa and the English. He further assured the President to order his men to get back to Bharuch and refer to the President in case the matter did not solve with that.[243] On his return to Bharuch the *Nawab* set out to tackle the matter himself. He went to Hansot with the intention of redressing his losses. He simultaneously pursued diplomatic route as well. He sought the help of Fatehsing Rao Gaekwad and wrote to the English President as well. Finally, the matter was settled with the help of Fatehsing's interference.[244] After 8 months of captivity his men were released and the *Nawab* paid Rs. 5,200 for their maintenance.[245] The *Nawab* also resented the fact that the English factory at Bharuch was put under the authority of Surat factory and not directly under Bombay.[246]

Whatever the cause may have been, the Bombay Council took the Nawab's defiant attitude seriously. Bharuch was attacked for the second time and in a short time taken by the British forces under Wedderburn on 18th November, 1772. The *Nawab* fled to the Koli chief of Dehwan, who provided refuge to him. The *Nawab* died within a short while to this event. His son Mumtaz Khan, under the direction of the Koli Chief Zalim Jalia, attempted to attack the town subsequently but was repulsed by the British garrison. Bharuch passed successfully into British possession, later to be given over to the Sindhia.

243 *MD III*, Lt. 208 in *HOB* Pp. 98-100.
244 Ibid, Lt.243 in *HOB*, P.123; *HSBSR-II*, Lt: 30, P: 173; *GOB II*, P. 68.
245 Ibid, Lt. 251 in *HOB*, P. 123.
246 *GOB II*, P. 72.

The British occupation of Bharuch brought the Bombay Presidency more closely into the power dynamics of the region, a process that began almost immediately with the commencement of the first Anglo-Maratha war. Gujarat was the theatre of the major action of this prolonged war.

FIRST ANGLO-MARATHA WAR IN GUJARAT

The Maratha war began as an internal disruption in the Maratha Polity at Poona. It was a struggle for the office of Peshwa amongst the rival factions of the Marathas at Poona comprising the *Barbhai* or the 'Ministerial Party' against the pretensions of Raghunath Rao (Raghoba), brother of earlier Peshwa, Balaji Baji Rao. G.S. Sardesai and Grant Duff have given details of this episode.[247] According to them, Raghunath Rao was accused of having assassinated Narayan Rao Peshwa, upon whose death Raghunath Rao came to power. He was known to have earlier made similar attempts with Madhav Rao Peshwa, but he proved stronger. Narayan Rao was weak. He was killed sometime in 1774. Once this charge was proved, the ministers at Poona known as *Barbhais* formed a league to oppose Raghoba. They started military action against Raghoba who was then encamped

[247] Grant Duff, op.cit., Vol. II, P. 204 onwards. G. S. Sardesai, *New History of the Marathas,* Vol III, Bombay, 1948, Pp. 63-88.

in Karnatak. Upon getting the news he joined Sindhia and Holkar in Burhanpur planning defence. Sindhia and Holkar entered into negotiations on his behalf, trying to secure favourable terms for Raghoba with the *Barbhais*. At about the same time a son was born to Narayan Rao posthumously. He was unanimously declared to be the next Peshwa and the *Barbhais* became strengthened. Raghoba, on the other hand, opened negotiations with the Bombay Presidency through the Surat factory chief Robert Gambier. This was the beginning of British interference in what was otherwise an internal war of the Marathas.

In the Course of the separate negotiations, being conducted by Sindhia and Holkar, they secretly agreed to hand over Raghoba to the *Barbhais*. Receiving this news Raghoba immediately fled to the vicinity of Baroda to join Govind Rao Gaekwad who had by then besieged Fatehsing Gaekwad in the confines of Baroda fort. Govind Rao was a partisan and staunch supporter of Raghoba. It was to Raghoba that he owed his present position. It becomes imperative here to understand the Gaekwad contest for power in Gujarat in order to appreciate the significance of the Gaekwad support to Anglo-Raghoba alliance. The death of Damaji Rao Gaekwad in 1768 brought many disputes in the Gaekwad chieftaincy of Baroda. Most importantly the succession dispute between two of his sons proved detrimental to the power this principality held in the larger Maratha Polity. In 1768 the last of the battles for supremacy was fought between the Peshwa and the Gaekwad. Damaji Rao refused to pay the

tribute due to the Peshwa that led to this battle known as *Battle of Dhodap.* Damaji Rao was defeated by Madhav Rao Peshwa and Govind Rao Gaekwad, his son, was taken as hostage to Poona. Almost immediately Damaji Rao died. Damaji Rao had five sons from two wives. Sayaji Rao was the eldest; Fatehsing was his brother and Manaji Rao still younger. Govind Rao on the other hand was the son of the eldest wife though younger to Sayaji Rao. His brother was Malhar Rao. Thus both Sayaji Rao with Fatehsing Rao as his regent and Govind Rao laid claim to the *Gadi* of Baroda. At that time the claim of Sayaji Rao and Fatehsing Rao was accepted by Madhav Rao Peshwa and the claims of Govind Rao also was admitted with the interference of Sindhia who patronized him. Govind Rao was assigned the military duties, as a part of the Gaekwad's responsibility towards the Peshwa, his overlord. Fatehsing Rao was given the civil administration of his possessions in Gujarat. In other words, Govind Rao was kept out of Gujarat and his chance of getting possession of his ancestral patrimony was nullified. When Raghoba came to power he reversed the decision and provided Govind Rao with 2,000 men and some guns for his conquest of Gujarat. He also gave to Govind Rao letters addressed to the English.[248] This was in January 1774. Govind Rao thus attacked Gaekwad possessions in South Gujarat starting from Songadh. He had replaced Fatehsing Rao's Chauthias with his own in all these areas and had besieged Baroda when Raghoba joined him.

[248] *GOB II*, P. 179.

Raghoba opened negotiations with the English at Surat through Narottam Das, his agent. Robert Gambier, the chief of Surat, was authorized by the President of Bombay to undertake these negotiations. In return of Bombay's alliance, Raghoba was asked to cede certain territories around Bombay viz., Salsette, Bassein, Karanja, etc. Raghoba who attached much importance to these strategic places around Bombay refused to cede them. In its place cession of certain areas around Surat and Bharuch was agreed upon.[249] The Bombay authorities were very keen to bring about this alliance formally and in their favour for which Gambier promised monetary and territorial rewards to Narottam Das, the agent.[250] The draft of the Treaty that was desired to be concluded between the two parties had to be revised several times because of technicalities. For instance, Bombay questioned the authority of Raghoba in alienating the territories and revenues of Surat and Bharuch, which belonged to the Gaekwads and Raghoba even as the Peshwa lacked the necessary authority to give it away.[251] It was desired that he should obtain the grant of these places from the Gaekwad family and transfer the same to the company.[252] In concluding the negotiations Gambier had expressed orders to make sure that the 'territories to be had' was to be conveniently situated for administering, and of the value of Rs. 18½ lakhs.[253]

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[249] Ibid. P. 209.
[250] Ibid. P. 212.
[251] Ibid, Pp. 216-217.
[252] Ibid.
[253] Ibid. Pp. 231-232.

In the meanwhile, Govind Rao and Raghoba had to raise the siege of Baroda as Fatehsing Rao received reinforcements from Poona. With this Govind Rao lost all the advantages he had gained in the last months.[254] However, before this information reached Bombay, the authorities had resolved to help Raghoba on 22nd January 1775.[255] In a skirmish with the ministerial forces Raghoba was defeated mainly because of the defection of his Arab forces. He immediately fled to Cambay apprehending general defection of his forces. He demanded the protection of the English Resident at Cambay but the *Nawab* refused to admit him. He therefore fled to Bhavnagar from where he was sent to Surat.[256] The Treaty of Surat was signed between the English and Raghoba in March 1775. In the final negotiation the English could obtain the territories of Bassein and its dependencies, Salsette and its dependencies, Greater and Little Karanja, Kenery, Elephanta and Hog Island. In Gujarat Raghoba granted the Peshwa's share of Jambusar, Olpad, Hansot, Ankleshwar etc to the English.[257] He also promised to procure necessary *sanads* for the Gaekwad's share of revenues from Bharuch town and *parganas*.[258] With this, the English troops entered the battleground with Thomas Keating as the commander.

It was also thought that Fatehsing Rao should be induced to join the Anglo-Raghoba alliance. It was proposed by Bombay to induce

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254 Ibid. Pp. 229-230 .
255 Ibid. P.231.
256 Ibid. P.245.
257 Ibid. 5th Article in the Treaty of Surat, P. 250.
258 Ibid. 6th Article in the Treaty of Surat.

Fatehsing Rao to desert the *Barbhais* cause. He was perceived as the soul of the opposing party as without him the *Barbhais* would be lost, not knowing the local fords and roads. It was also proposed to bring about an accommodation between the two brothers, Govind Rao and Fatehsing Rao Gaekwad. Territorial divisions for the same were also proposed by the English factors.[259] To this, Fatehsing also replied positively.[260] It was reported that the *Barbhais* did not trust him.[261] Because of the British involvement the Gaekwad contest was subsumed within the larger power struggle in the region.

Several factors were responsible for the commencement of this war. It was not just a struggle of Raghoba to gain power but also of the Bombay Presidency. The Bombay Presidency had to apply for financial support to Bengal for its sustenance. This was an opportunity for Bombay to augment its resources through territorial cessions, which could make it self-sufficient. The advantages to be had from the cessions made by Raghoba are expressed by Bombay council to Warren Hastings in these words:

"...The compact and the convenient situation of the several parganas with respect to our settlements of Surat and Bharuch will enable us to collect the revenues with little expense, and a very small addition to the garrisons at those places will be quite sufficient for their defense.

[259] Ibid. Pp. 267-269.
[260] Ibid.
[261] Ibid. A Note by the English agent Shankar Mall.

The Revenues will defray the expenses and provide the investment of this presidency. The Company will possess many valuable articles of Commerce within their own territories, and be able greatly to extend the sale of wollens and other staples of Great Britain. We have been some (time) in peaceable possession of all the ceded territories except Bassein. The revenues are collecting without any difficulty..."[262]

The income arising from the limited territories under the control of Bombay and the trade being carried on, although extensive, was not enough for meeting the expenses. Therefore the necessity to enlarge its territories was felt by the Bombay authorities since 1768 since which time additions were made to the fortifications and the military establishment was increased.[263] According to later English source two motives had induced the British to interfere in the Maratha affairs. Bombay needed to have control of Salsette for its existence and the danger from the French who might have become a threat with stronger support on the west coast. The English wanted Marathas on their side since the Maratha support could have been decisive.[264]

However, the Calcutta authorities were not in favour of action against the Marathas. Warren Hastings dubbed the steps taken by Bombay as 'impolitic, dangerous, unauthorized and unjust' and the

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262 Ibid, P.324.

263 English East India Comapany, *An Historical account of the settlement and possession of Bombay,* London, 1781, Pp. 8-9.

264 W.W.Hunter, *The Imperial Gazetteer of India-The Indian Empire,* Vol. II-Historical, London, 1907, P.442.

Treaty with Raghoba was declared invalid. It seems that Calcutta was attempting to assert its position as the Supreme authority of the British East India Company in India over the other two presidencies. It was recently vested with this power through the Regulating Act of 1773. The troops were ordered to be recalled and their intention of sending an Embassy to Poona to open fresh negotiations was declared by Calcutta.[265] Colonel Upton was accordingly sent to Poona. At the same time the cession of Bharuch revenues made by Fatehsing Rao, districts of Chikli, Variav and Koral were ordered to be retained till a definitive treaty was concluded with Poona.[266] It seems that the English treated their relations with Fatehsing Rao as being separate from the Raghoba alliance. Fatehsing Rao attached himself with the English with the hope that they would bring an understanding with Govind Rao. He also made various territorial cessions to please them like the Bharuch revenues, villages of Koral, Batta, etc.[267] Fatehsing Rao was ready to give 1/3rd of his possessions to Govind Rao to bring the struggle for authority amongst the Gaekwad to an end. However, Govind Rao was not satisfied. He withdrew his support to Raghoba and took to depredations.[268] After much procrastination Govind Rao accepted the terms proposed by Fatehsing through Col. Keating and an accommodation was reached,[269] though the Maratha sources inform us that he was not satisfied. He contacted the ministerial party. He was then assured of their protection and was induced to take an oath of

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265 *GOB II*, Pp. 295-296.
266 Ibid. Pp. 322-323.
267 Ibid. Pp. 310 & 323.
268 Ibid. Pp. 311-312.
269 Ibid. P.320.

allegiance to the infant Peshwa.[270] In 1776 the Treaty of Purandhar was signed and the Bombay authorities were required to disband Raghoba's army and deliver him to Poona.

The War with the Marathas was however renewed following the reports of the tripartite alliance in south between HyderAli, Nizam and the Marathas at Poona. The Poona ministers specifically demanded the relinquishment of Salsette and handing over of Raghoba to get out of the above anti-British alliance.[271] This was not acceptable to the English. With the recommencement of War in November 1779, General Goddard was assigned the duties of leading the British troops and he was given both political and military powers by the Governor General, Warren Hastings. It was suggested by Bombay President to befriend the Gaekwad chief, which would safeguard the northern possessions of the English territories.[272] Action was commenced on 3rd Jan 1780, with the English Chief of Bharuch taking control of the Peshwa's *pargana*s of Ankleshwar and Hansot. The *kamavisdar*s called for aid from Fatehsing Rao who did not seem to have responded.[273] On 26th Jan 1780 the Treaty of Kundhela was signed between Gen. Goddard on behalf of the East India Company and Fatehsing Rao.[274] Amongst other things Fatehsing Rao accepted the suzerainty of the British, which freed him completely from the tutelage of the Peshwa. It was further stipulated to share the territories

270 G.S.Sardesai, *Peshwa Daftar no. 36*, op.cit, P. 289.
271 *GOB III*. P. 42.
272 Ibid. Pp. 36-37.
273 Ibid. Pp. 57-58.
274 Ibid, P.60.

in Gujarat with the Peshwa's possessions to the North of Mahi falling into Fatehsing Rao's share and the Gaekwad's share of the Surat revenues and other areas south of Tapi falling into the control of the British.[275] Later, Ahmadabad was captured by the joint forces of Gen. Goddard and Fatehsing Rao.[276] It was given to the charge of Fatehsing Rao. This acquisition manifested the superior position of the English in this part of the country. Goddard shrewdly confined his military actions to such areas as were the possessions of Fatehsing Rao and thereby protected the British areas of Bharuch and Surat from the effects of war.[277] The theatre of war from now onwards turned to Konkan from Gujarat. By December 1780, however, peace was established between the Marathas and the English for tackling the rising power of their mutual enemy, Haider Ali in the South. The Treaty of Salbai was concluded whereby the gains made by the Bombay Presidency were lost completely. Fatehsing Rao reverted back to his previous status of vassalage to the Peshwa. In addition, he lost his share of Bharuch's revenues also. Bharuch was given as gift to the English by the *barbhais* in consideration of signing the Treaty of Salbai. The English in turn gave it to Sindhia as he was instrumental in bringing about the above agreement. With this, the ambitions of financial independence by Bombay Presidency and the Fatehsing Rao's dream of freeing himself from Peshwa's tutelage, both were ended. It was as much a loss to Bombay as it was to the Gaekwad. It could be gathered that Bombay's interests were sacrificed for the sake of the larger ambition of the English in India. However, this turn of

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275 Ibid. P.56.
276 Ibid. P.66.
277 Ibid. P. 82.

events did not end the friendship between the Gaekwad and the Bombay Presidency. On the other hand an informal alliance was continued between the two. In fact the English Company became a third party to the political relations between the Peshwa and the Gaekwad through a clause in the Treaty of Salbai whereby the English reserved the right to interfere in the event of attempts to encroach on the territories of the Gaekwad principality by the Poona authorities. This was manifested when Fatehsing Rao died and Manaji Rao was appointed the regent in his place by Poona. Nana Fadnavis demanded the cession of Gaekwad *chauth* of Surat as a price for Manaji Rao's succession. At this time Charles Malet, the English resident at Poona, promptly intervened reminding the Poona administration of the above article. The matter ended there itself. Thus all these factors contributed towards cementing the relations between the Gaekwads and the Company. In 1802-03 Baroda applied for military help from Bombay to quell a serious internal disturbance, which led the English to establish their superior power at Baroda and thereby expand their hegemony in the rest of Gujarat as well.

BARODA

Baroda had become the seat of suzerain power in Gujarat under the Gaekwads. By the end of the Century, the Gaekwads along with the Peshwa were the accepted overlords in almost all the areas of the region. This chieftaincy expanded its power under Damaji Rao and

Fatehsing Rao. With the death of Govind Rao in 1800, however, the fortunes of this dynasty took low ebb. The internal dissensions mainly resulting from the factional fights and court politics created instability facilitating the interference of the English. The English East India Company, by this time had acquired a definite political character. The defeat and death of Tipu Sultan had added considerable influence to the position of the Bombay Presidency. They now saw the way to fulfilling their ambitions that were retarded by the Treaty of Salbai. The episode of the establishment of British superiority at Baroda is to be seen in this context.

On the eve of British interference in this chieftaincy there were mainly three powerful indigenous factions at Baroda, Kanhoji Rao, Raoji Appaji and the Arab *sibandi*s. In September 1800 Anand Rao Gaekwad succeeded his father Govind Rao, on the latter's death. AnadRao was of a weak personality. Therefore, the administrative management was taken over by Kanhoji Rao Gaekwad[278], his illegitimate brother. He worked as a regent. Besides him there was one Raoji Appaji (Raoba) who was an influential minister under Govind Rao. He had his own ambitions. The third party was of the Arab Sibandis[279] who were organized into groups and were in control

[278] Kanhoji Rao is generally referred to as illegitimate in the English sources. However, strictly speaking he was not illegitimate. He was an offspring of Govind Rao's wife who was the daughter of a Koli chieftain. Amongst the Marathas such wives did not enjoy the same status as the Maratha princesses. Therefore, such an offspring also was not accepted as the rightful heir. Kanhoji Rao was an ambitious man and had rebelled against his father three times in his father's lifetime itself.

[279] For a detail account of the role of the Arab Sibandis in the power politics of Baroda and the British Policy to oust them, see Rashmi Batchu, *The Arab Sibandis at Baroda and*

of all the city gates and forts of the Gaekwad kingdom. The Shroffs who defrayed their salaries in turn controlled them.

Kanhoji Rao upon assuming the reigns of the government, attempted to bring some semblance organization to the finances of the chieftaincy. A large part of the expenses was devoted to the maintenance of the mercenaries. Kanhoji Rao's measures were mainly aimed at reducing this expenditure. The Arab Jamadars, unhappy with this move, conspired and imprisoned Kanhoji Rao and placed him under the supervision of their own guards.[280] In his place they brought Raoba to power as Diwan. Upon Raoba's assuming government he was confronted with the same problems. Ousting the Arabs was beyond his means. Firstly they were in control of all the forts and city walls including that of Baroda. Secondly, Kanhoji was kept under their control and could be used to replace Raoba if they wanted.[281] In the meanwhile Malhar Rao of Kadi had risen in rebellion. He was the uncle of Anand Rao and a minor Gaekwad chieftain. The Gaekwads of Kadi were a parallel line of the Gaekwads in Gujarat. Khande Rao, brother of Damaji Rao, had increased Gaekwad influence in the Central and North Gujarat as a deputy of Damaji Rao. Therefore, Damaji Rao gave him a jagir of Nadiad, Kadi and a few other places. He was required to pay an annual *nazrana* and be a vassal of Baroda. Malhar Rao was his son and successor. He had risen in rebellion in support of Kanhoji Rao and the force sent to tackle him under Babaji

the British Policy towards them 1800-1803, PIHC 68th Session, 2008, Delhi.

280 *GOB IV*, P. 127.

281 Ibid. P.22.

was defeated by Malhar Rao. He had taken the towns of Visnagar and Vijapur and it was reported that he was marching to take Ahmedabad as well.[282] The Arabs had refused to march against him, as it meant leaving Baroda. At this juncture Raoba asked for troops from the British, as even the Peshwa's troops were not on hand. Peshwa had farmed his revenues to the Gaekwad in 1800. Therefore whole of the region was then under the administration of the Gaekwads. [283] Thus, to secure his own position as Diwan, Raoba invited the English to take control of Baroda, by ousting the Arabs.[284]

It was to quell the disturbance created by Malhar Rao that Alexandar Walker was sent to Baroda in January 1802. The formal reason of his visit was to offer condolence to Anand Rao on the death of Govind Rao. This visit, Walker explained, was delayed because of the delay in the grant of the Surat *chauth* and the *pargana* of Chikli by the Gaekwad government.[285] Walker was given the charge of commanding the troops[286] sent against Malhar Rao and was later made the first British Resident at Baroda. Upon their arrival, the British had to confront the Arabs who had become all-powerful. Two Treaties were concluded between the Company and the Gaekwads whereby the British were accepted as the paramount authority by Baroda. The first was signed on 8th March 1802 at Cambay between Raoba on behalf of the Gaekwad ruler and the English President of

[282] Ibid. Pp. 127-128 & 17.
[283] Ibid. P.53.
[284] Ibid. 32.
[285] Ibid, P. 148.
[286] Ibid. P.115.

Bombay, Jonathan Duncan[287]. In the 2^{nd} article of this agreement it was stipulated to reduce the Arab sibandis through the cooperation of the British and to permanently subsidize from the Company a force of about 2000 sepoys and a company of European artillery and its proportion of lascars with an estimated expense of Rs. 65,ooo per month. It was further agreed to keep this clause secret till the end of the Kadi rebellion.[288] Another treaty was entered into on 6^{th} June 1802 and the British were accepted as the paramount power at Baroda.[289] It was agreed privately between the Company and Raoba whereby the English assured Raoba that the post of *diwan* would permanently reside in the latter's family. A Sanad was duly issued.[290]

In the armed action that followed, Malhar Rao was defeated and his *jagir* confiscated.[291] Later he fled to Saurashtra and continued with his rebellious activities against the Gaekwad administration. With the end of Kadi rebellion, Walker and Raoba together disbanded the Arab Sibandis of Baroda[292] and the British authority was firmly entrenched in Baroda. In 1805 a single treaty called the Definitive Treaty was concluded between the two in place of the multiple treaties signed earlier. This made the alliance more definite and firm. With the establishment of the British power over Baroda the British were

287 Ibid. P.281.
288 Ibid. P.281.
289 Ibid. P. 410.
290 B.A.Gupte (ed), *Selections from the Historical Records of the Hereditary Ministers of Baroda,* Calcutta, 1922, P.35.
291 *GOB IV*, P. 376.
292 This episode has been treated in detail in the last chapter.

placed in an advantageous position to extend their direct influence in the rest of the region as well.

SAURASHTRA AND NORTH-EAST GUJARAT

The Marathas, Gaekwad and Peshwa, were jointly the accepted overlords of the various chieftaincies in Saurashtra and North-east Gujarat regions.[293] These principalities were liable to pay an annual tribute *khandani* to the overlord. However this tribute was not easily forthcoming and the Marathas had to carry out annual expeditions called *Mulkgiri* to collect the same. The amount of the tribute was decided according to the resistance power of the tribute paying party. The more powerful principalities always paid less. It was also a question of honour with these principalities to not pay the tribute. By

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293 The North-east region of Gujarat consists of several small principalities generally referred to as *Mewasi* because of the recalcitrant nature of the inhabitants. It mainly consists of the Rewa-Kantha, Mahi-Kantha, Sabar-Kantha, etc areas, each under a specific administrative agency during the British rule. Lying to the extreme north-east corner of the Bombay Presidency, the Mahi-Kantha was bounded on north by Sirohi and Mewar, on the east by Dungarpur, on west by Lunavada and Kadi district and on the south by the Rewa Kantha states of Lunavada and Balasinor. It included the major principalities of Idar, Rehvar, Vatrak-Kantha, Sabar-Kantha, Bavisi and Kotasan. J.M.Campbell (ed), *Bom.Pres.Gaz- Mahi Kantha,* vol-V, Bombay, 1880, Pp. 355-356.

Rewa-kantha is referred to the areas lying on the banks of the river Narmada, but it also includes an irregular band of territory passing north from Narmada to Mahi. Bounded on the north by Dungarpur and Banswada, on the east by the sub-divisions of Jhalod and Dohad in Panch Mahals and parts of Khandesh, on the south by the Gaekwad territories and the Mandvi sub-division of Surat and on the west by Ankleshwar, Bharuch, godhra, Kalol and parts of Kaira. Larger principalities in this area consisted of Chhota Udepur, Devgarh Bariya, Sunth, Lunavada and Balasinor. J.M.Campbell (ed), *Bom.Pres.Gaz- Rewa Kantha,*Vol. VI, 1880, P. 1.

Saurashtra region was generally referred to as Kathiawad in the British sources, although a distinction is also made between various provinces '*prants*' of Saurashtra by Alexander Walker while dealing specifically with this subject. *Walker-Selections XXXIX,* op.cit.

the agreement of 1752 the tribute due from these areas were equally divided between the Peshwa and the Gaekwad. Even then, their respective territories were minutely interspersed. Since Fatehsing Rao's time the Peshwa's share of the tribute of Mahi-Kantha was given in Ijara to the Gaekwads.[294] Since 1800 whole of the revenue of the Peshwa in Gujarat was assigned to the Gaekwads. Thus, effectively the Gaekwads were the sole overlords of the region. Therefore it was easier for the British to expand their base here.

Alexander Walker considered the British interference in Saurashtra immediate to the establishment of their influence in Baroda. The reason for this was an application by the Kathi chiefs of Cheetal, Jasdan, Jetpur, Kondla, etc. in 1803 seeking English protection. This came as a result of the activities of the Bhavnagar chief expanding his territories at the expense of the Kathis. Bhavnagar chief, Wakhatsing had undertaken these activities since the last years of the 18th Century when he had emerged as a powerful ruler in the vicinity. This proved to be disastrous to the Kathis. In addition, the Jam of Nawanagar also had started making fresh levies on the Kathis. The Kathis were thus on the brink of extinction. The British were perceived as a bigger power capable of protecting them against their mightier neighbours. Thus, the Kathis applied for British protection.[295] In addition the Raja of Morvi (Morbi) also sent his *Vakil* to Walker at Baroda seeking English intervention in his quarrel with the Raja of

294 *HSBSR II*, Lt. 13, P.158.
295 *Walker-Selections XXXIX*, P.64.

Malia. Earlier Walker had sent his agent Moulvi Mohammad Ali to Saurashtra to gain information on the state of affairs. The Moulvi informed Walker of the apprehensions of all the principal chiefs, especially the Jam of Nawanagar, regarding the English interference in their internal affairs. He tried to dissuade the Morbi Raja from taking such a step.[296] At the same time the other concerns of the Company authorities made them decline further action in this quarter.

In 1804 it was proposed by Walker to begin the policy of extending English influence in Saurashtra. A proposition was sought to be made to all the tribute paying chieftaincies. The ones who accepted were to receive protection while the ones refusing were to be chastised.[297] In the division of the territory so possessed, the Company was to have all the forts and seacoast of Saurashtra, while the Gaekwad was to be assigned territories of the same value in the interior.[298] A British establishment in Saurashtra was deemed of great importance for the sake of checking the piracies that were injurious to the commerce of Bombay. The possession of the Coast would also have enabled them to extend their commercial and political influence to the mouth of Indus.[299] In addition, the Kaira district, consisting of the *parganas* of Dholka, Dhanduka, Gogha, Ranpur, etc, passed into the British hands from the Peshwa in 1803 through the Treaty of Bassein. There was a need to safeguard these areas from the

296 Ibid. P.68.
297 Ibid. P.199.
298 Ibid.
299 Ibid. P.509.

neighbouring turbulent chiefs of Kathiawad. These were the border areas. It was decided to arrange for the Gaekwad's rights first and that of the Peshwa's later as doing both at the same time would have alarmed the chieftains.[300] This was later to create problems between the Company and Peshwa.

The British interference in this region was in the nature of mediation and arbitration. The instrument for the above was the revenue settlements. The Mulkgiri expedition conducted annually by the Gaekwad armies was cumbersome and costly. In order to avoid this as well as to further their own interests it was thought expedient to arrange for the revenue settlements on a permanent basis and receivable through the British authorities. In August 1807, Col. Walker, jointly with the Gaikwad government, sent letters asking the Saurashtra chiefs to send their *Vakils* to the English camp in Goontoo (also written as Goondoo in the sources) in Morbi principality to settle the Mulkgiri payments.[301] These settlements were perpetual in nature but the Amount of revenue to be collected was subject to change and was made for 10 years known as Decennial settlements. *Fail zamini* and *Ad Zamini* were taken from each chieftain ensuring regular and timely payment. In addition, *Sankla Zamini* was also taken which made the chieftains mutually responsible for each other.[302]

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300 Ibid. P.200.
301 *Walker-Selections XXXIX,* Pp.76 & 78.
302 Ibid. P.98. For the meaning of the different types of *Zamini,* see 'Securities' in the second chapter.

The *Nawab* of Junagadh and the *Jam* of Nawanagar offered some resistance to these settlements. The Raja of Malia was chastised by the English troops and the fort of Malia was destroyed by Walker to show the military strength of the British.[303]Just when the British troops were camping at *Goontoo* for carrying out the settlement, the Jam of Nawanagar acquired the fort of Kondorna. The background of this was that the Raja of Porbandar had a considerable number of Makrani sibandis in his employment. In a dispute with the Arab Sibandis and the Raja, the Makranis around 800, left Porbandar and took the fort of Kondorna under their control. The Jam of Nawanagar bought the fort by defraying the arrears of salaries due to the sibandis.[304] The intervention of the British troops in favour of Porbandar made the Jam relinquish the possession of the fort. The British in return obtained half a share of the revenues of the port of Porbandar in 1809.[305] The chief of Nawanagar resisted the attempts of the British even after this. It was only after the show of strength by the British in 1714 that Nawanagar yielded.

After the demise of Nawab Hamid Khan of Junagadh, Gaekwad's *Naib-Diwan* Vithal Rao got the whole of Amreli with British aid by way of *nazrana*. This was following the increase in influence of the Arab *Jamadar*, Umar Mukhasan and his faction in the *darbar* of the new *Nawab*, Bahadur Khan and the lowering of Diwan Raghunathji's power at Junagadh. Earlier the Gaekwads had only

303 *GOB VII*, P. 570.
304 *Walker-Selections XXXIX*, Pp.140-141.
305 *GOB VIII*, P.350.

1/3rd share in the revenues. In 1812-13 the Gaekwads took over the entire *pargana* and also built a fort there.[306] In addition, the *pargana* of Kodinar was also given to the Gaekwads.[307] In 1815-16 Jamadar Mukhasan attempted to hurt the Nawab physically, because of which captain Ballantyne[308] had to take action and oust him and his men from the town. The Nawab, in gratitude, waived off his right to Zortalabi[309] from Dhandhuka, Ranpur, Gogha and Dholera in 1817.[310] In 1821, through an agreement, the Nawab authorized the English to collect his Zortalabi throughout the province and retain one-fourth of the amount collected as expenses for the same. Sundarji Shivji, a Khatri horse trader, who enjoyed much influence with Captain Ballantyne and brought about above agreements, was made the *diwan* of Junagadh with British support.[311]

The general nature of revenue settlements was that an agreement was made with all the chieftains whereby (a) they were not to provide asylum to any thief, Bharwatia (outlaw), or a rebel of the sarkar; (b) no depredation to be carried out in the Sarkar's or company's territories and merchants and travelers were to be protected, and (c) no forcible possession of lands was to be made.[312]

The British and the Gaekwad made these settlements arbitrarily and the Peshwa was not consulted. As the share of Peshwa's revenues

306 Ibid. Pp.343-344; *Tarikh-i-sorath*, P.82.
307 Ibid. P. 344; Ibid. Pp. 209-210.
308 British agent for Saurashtra.
309 Junagadh's Zortalbi is similar to Marathi *Khandani*.
310 *Statistical Account of Junagadh*, pp. 54-55.
311 Ibid. P.55.
312 *Walker-Selections XXXIX*, Pp.110-111.

in Gujarat was farmed out to the Gaekwad and its term was to end in 1814, no immediate problem was faced by the British in 1807-08. However, the British were able to bring about a temporary arrangement empowering them to collect the revenues of the Peshwa as well. There were still loopholes left in the agreement concluded by Elphinstone but the interests of the British were safeguarded for the time being.[313] Hence, the problem of negotiation would have come after the end of the decennial arrangement i.e., in 1817-18. By then, however, the Peshwa was defeated decisively and his possessions, in Gujarat as elsewhere, were taken over by the Bombay Presidency. With this, the problem of Saurashtra tribute settlement also ended.

The effective arrangement of the Revenue Settlements in Saurashtra and its benefits to the British prompted its adoption also in Mahi-Kantha in 1811-1812. Lieut. Col. Ballantyne was deputed to induce the chiefs of this area to accept the Company's protection. Bacha Jamadar of Baroda, the commandant of the Mulkgiri forces in Mahi-Kantha, joined him. Decennial settlements similar to Kathiawad were made here as well with regard to the claims of the Gaekwads.[314] In 1817-18 the last Peshwa Baji Rao was defeated and the office of Peshwa was abolished. With this, Peshwa's rule in Gujarat also came to an end and his territories passed into British control. Through another agreement reached with the Gaekwad Chief on 3rd April 1820,

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313 *GOB IX*, Pp. 53-56.

314 J.R.Kelly (ed), *Selections from the Records of Bombay Government XII, Mahee Kantha*, New Series, Bombay, 1856, p.6.

the British gained the sole management of the Kathiawad and Mahi-Kantha revenues.[315]

In 1800 The British East India Company abolished the Nawabi of Surat and the Nawab was pensioned off. The office of Chief and the Council was replaced by three different departments, that of a Revenue Collector, a Judge and Megistrate and a lieut. Governor for Law and Order.[316] In 1802 the Gaekwad share of Surat was given to the British and that of the Peshwa in 1803 through the Treaty of Bassein. In 1803 the British also came into possession of Bharuch from Sindhia. In case of Kutch the Treaty of subsidiary alliance of 1819 made the British overlords. The British had become absolute paramount power in Gujarat by 1820

[315] Ibid. P.7.

[316] *Bom. Pres. Gaz. Vol. II, Surat*, op.cit., P. 154.

MULTIPLE AUTHORITIES - DISPUTED SOVEREIGNTY

It has been observed in the following pages that an acute fragmentation of authority had taken place in Gujarat during this period. This situation led to an overlapping of rights of various contenders over different areas of the region, which led to regular conflicts amongst them. This fragmentation of power was a result of the breakdown of the Mughal authority in the region subsequently leading to the establishment of many independent principalities of varying denominations. The question of the establishment and sustenance of so many principalities without a homogenous source of legitimacy has engaged the attention of scholars working on 18th century Gujarat for sometime. This study attempts to understand the extent of this fragmentation and the milieu in which the subsequent conflicts came into being. One of the most striking features of the political scenario of the period was the haphazard way in which these principalities came to exercise authority. In almost all the places the authority was divided and shared between multiple claimants and this created confusion regarding the actual nature of sovereignty in these principalities. The lack of resources with these principalities and the mounting expenditure made territorial aggrandizement a necessity for their survival. As noted in the second chapter, the security holders, the Girasias, the *desai*s, etc had developed considerable political clout during this period diluting the actual power of the rulers, the Marathas and the *Nawab*s alike.

Authority in this context is to be understood as the claim and the right to govern and collect a share in the revenues in any given place. The revenue rights that came to be exercised by various claimants during the 18th Century disregarded the traditional fiscal divisions of *pargana*s and *sarkar*s. The right to collect revenues also implied a right to administer the place. Thus, in the towns that were jointly administered by the Marathas and the Nawabs a *chauthia* was appointed as the Maratha representative. Here also the consideration was to keep an actual account of the everyday income that was collected in the towns and the city gates like the customs duties, fines, etc. The claimants were only keen to share such income among themselves and not everyone was keen to administer the region. Several incidents that took place during this period throw some light on the ethos of the politics of that period.

The process of sharing authority and revenues between two or more superior authorities in the region began since 1725 when Pilaji Rao and Kanthaji Kadam Bande were assigned the *chauth* of south and North of river Mahi respectively by Hamid Khan. With the establishment of dual Mughal-Maratha rule in 1737-38, the administration was also shared between the two. According to the terms of agreement, Renkoji posted his own men at Raigadh Gate, Khan Jahan Gate, Jamalpur Gate, Astodia and Raipur Gates. Manning these gates was left in the Maratha charge. Renkoji appointed his own *naib*s, *havaldar*s, *faujdar*s, *thanadar*s in addition to the Mughal officers, at places where revenues under different heads were collected. These places included the office for the collection of

religious taxes, miscellaneous taxes, animal markets, mint, Jeweler's market, *pan* market, oil and vegetables *mandi*s, fords and *chakla*s. Renkoji's *naib*s were instructed to work in co-operation with the Nazim's officers.[317] The sharing of administration was bound to create friction. Since the beginning of dual administration we find regular skirmishes taking place between the two parties, mainly on the issue of revenue sharing.

With the death of Momin Khan I Najm-ud-Daula in 1741 the situation worsened. More factional fights amongst the *naib*s of both the Mughals and the Marathas ensued. Muftakhir Khan and Fida-ud-Din Khan were jointly appointed as the Mughal Naib-Nazims who however could not hold on to power. They made way to Jawan Mard Khan. Khande Rao Gaekwad, as Damaji Rao's deputy at Ahmedabad, on the other hand replaced Renkoji. Renkoji was imprisoned for mismanagement of funds. He was recalled by Umabai Dabhade to the Deccan to be reinstated after one year to his earlier position of Maratha *naib* at Ahmadabad. In the meanwhile Jawan Mard Khan ousted the *naib* of Khande Rao from Ahmadabad and wrested *pargana haveli* Ahmadabad from him and became the sole master of the Maratha *mahal*s as well.[318] It could be seen here that both parties treated the agreement of joint rule as a temporary arrangement. It was an arrangement in which each party waited to eliminate the other from power and take complete control of the territories. Repeatedly the Mughal *naib*s attempted to oust the Maratha *naib*s and similarly Renkoji also intrigued to occupy Ahmadabad completely. The

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317 *Mirat*, P. 576.
318 *Mirat*, P. 688.

factional fights amongst both parties however induced them to seek cross-alliances. Thus, Khande Rao and Jawan Mard Khan allied for a while against Renkoji, while the latter sought the help of Sher Khan Babi.[319] In fact since 1725 it was no longer a Mughal-Maratha contest; the local *faujdar*s and the various Maratha *sardar*s individually were trying to take control of the region and at times allying with each other.

The phase of joint Mughal-Maratha rule came to an end in 1752 with the conquest of Ahmadabad by Peshwa's deputy. At the same time, Damaji Rao was compelled to surrender half of the conquered territories in Gujarat to the Peshwa. Since then the Peshwa became a direct party with territorial interests in the region. Thus, we find the emergence of another kind of dual authority in the region: that of the Peshwa and the Gaekwads. At this time Shripat Rao was appointed as *Sarsubah* at Ahmadabad and Sewak Ram as Damaji Rao's *naib*. Rs. 6,ooo was fixed as Gaekwad's share of expenses for guarding the city of Ahmadabad.[320]

The situation in the region did not change much with this development. Friction existed in the Peshwa-Gaekwad relations as well. Three major battles took place between the Gaekwads and the Peshwas at different points of time. Unlike Sindhia and Holkar, the protégés who owed their independent position to the Peshwa, the Gaekwads were not a natural vassal of the Peshwa. The status of vassalage to the Peshwa was imposed on the Gaekwads. In fact the

319 Ibid.
320 Ibid. P.750.

two represented two rival factions of the Maratha polity. It is important here to understand the nature of relationship between the two and for this we need to trace back the rise of Peshwa as the superior authority and dwell on the nature of Maratha polity for a while.

The Maratha polity during the 18th century was a loose confederacy of various factions claiming legitimacy from Shivaji's successor Raja Shahu. With the death of Shivaji in 1680 and the rapid Mughal expansion into the Deccan, the Maratha polity disintegrated. Sambhaji, the first son of Shivaji and his successor was killed by Aurangzeb. Shivaji's second son, Rajaram with his headquarters at Kolhapur kept up the opposition to Mughal authority. Subsequent conquests were being carried out by individual Maratha Sardars. Emperor Bahadur Shah, Aurangzeb's successor, released Sambhaji's son Shahu, who was brought up by Aurangzeb, in order to control the Marathas. Shahu's release created a schism amongst the Marathas. At this time the Maratha administration was carried on by, what is known as, the *Ashtha Pradhan* (council of eight ministers). Amongst the important offices in the *Ashtha Pradhan* was that of *Peshwa* and *Senapati*. The *Senapati* was in charge of the Military and the *Peshwa* that of fiscal administration. It was during this struggle for hegemony between the two factions of Shivaji's successors that the office of *Peshwa* gained prominence under Balaji Vishwanath. Balaji Vishwanath was a *Karkun* in the service of a prominent Maratha *sardar* Dhanaji Jadhav.[321] He could rise in Shahu's favour by helping

[321] Grant Duff, Vol I, op.cit., P.423.

Shahu gain an upper hand in his struggle with Tarabai, wife of Rajaram and regent to her son, during 1712-13. During this time he also rose from being a mere administrator to becoming a military general. In 1714 Balaji Vishwanath was appointed to the office of *Peshwa*. After the assumption of office he made certain arrangements in the administration that made the Maratha *sardar*s largely independent of the Raja. Their obligation towards the Raja was confined merely to the payment of *Sardeshmukhi*. The revenue collection and management of the territories conquered were left completely to the respective sardars.[322] The Peshwa also took complete control of the administration replacing the Raja for all practical purposes. Under Baji Rao the office of the Peshwa came to acquire definite military overtones and the office also became hereditary in this Family. The Peshwa thus replaced the Raja as the focal point of the Maratha power. Meanwhile, in the period intervening between Balaji Vishwanath's death in 1720 and the formal investiture of Baji Rao I to the office of Peshwa in 1721, Damaji Rao Gaekwad I, who was under the command of Khande Rao Dabhade, the *Senapati*, distinguished himself and came to be invested with the title of *Shamsher Bahadur* and the post of second-in-command of Khande Rao Dabhade.[323] In the following decade Baji Rao Peshwa expanded his sphere of authority at the expense of the *Senapati* in Deccan. This was resented by the *Senapati* who allied with Nizam-ul-mulk Asaf Jah I to subvert the rising power of the Peshwa. Gaekwad and Kanthaji as protégés and vassals of the

322 Satish Chandra, *Medieval India, II-Mughal Empire,* Delhi, 2007, Pp.498-499.
323 Grant Duff, Vol I, op.cit., P.472.

Senapati were consolidating their position in Gujarat. Their position became more definite after the *chauth* settlements of 1725 with Hamid Khan and later with Sarbuland Khan. At this juncture the Peshwa struck a harsh blow to this faction by killing the Senapati in the Battle of Bhilupur[324] in Gujarat. He also sent Udaji Powar as a check on the growing power of the Gaekwads and allied himself with the Mughal Nazim Sarbuland Khan. However, the Peshwa did not intervene in the affairs of Gujarat effectively until 1752, and by 1735 Damaji Rao Gaekwad was the only Maratha *sardar* who could firmly establish his authority in Gujarat. After the Battle of Bhilupur, the *Senapati* faction itself experienced uncertainty as the Dabhade family declined even though Umabai Dabhade continued to hold the reigns for a while. Umabai's death and the rise of Damaji Rao Gaekwad II and his rift with the Dabhade family sealed the fate of the Dabhade family.[325] By 1749 Damaji Rao Gaekwad had become very powerful. At this time the Maratha Raja, Shahu died leading to another spate of succession wars. Tara Bai, in a bid to oust Peshwa Balaji Baji Rao from power, formed a confederacy of Maratha *sardars* who were opposed to the Peshwa. She invited Damaji Rao Gaekwad to lead the confederacy. Initially the confederates gained some success. Later the Peshwa invited the members of the opposing confederacy to his camp on the pretext of negotiations by taking sacred oaths and fraudulently imprisoned them. Damaji Rao was also imprisoned for almost two years and was compelled to surrender to the Peshwa half the share of his territories in Gujarat. He was also made to accept the over lordship

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324 Bhilupur is situated to the North of Ahmedabad.

325 P.M.Joshi (ed), *Selections from the Peshwa Daftar*, no.12, New Series, Bombay, 1962, passim.

of the Peshwa, pay annual tribute and render military service. Since then the Peshwa gained supremacy over the Gaekwads. However, the Gaekwads never accepted Peshwa's over lordship wholeheartedly and allied with any force that opposed Peshwa's power: earlier it was the Nizam and later in the Century the English East India Company. The third battle between the Peshwa and the Gaekwads took place in 1768, just before the death of Damaji Rao Gaekwad. While Madhav Rao I was the Peshwa at Poona, Raghunath Rao, the brother of Balaji Baji Rao and a rival claimant to the office of the Peshwa, rebelled against his nephew. In this, Damaji Rao Gaekwad supported Raghunath Rao and sent military help with his son Govind Rao as the commander of the army. Raghunath Rao along with his supporters including Govind Rao, were taken prisoners in the Battle of Dhodap fought again in Gujarat. A large amount of money was levied on Damaji Rao as fine for rebellion and as outstanding tribute. In the following year, the death of Damaji Rao and the struggle for succession amongst his sons, mainly Fatehsing Rao Gaekwad and Govind Rao Gaekwad, gave further scope for the Peshwa to intervene and subvert the power of the Gaekwads. The question of the inter-relationship of the Peshwa and Gaekwad was raised a decade later by the East India Company servants in the lengthy discussions relating to the right to alienate lands belonging to the Gaekwads' share of the territories in Gujarat, following the Treaty of Purandhar.

LOCAL CHIEFTAINCIES

The structure of authority in Gujarat was stratified since many centuries; there existed a hierarchy of political authorities. At the apex was the Head of a centralized State who was the highest authority. Below this was another layer of people exercising power located in different areas and invariably organized on clan basis. The local Rajputs[326] are to be included in this category. They exercised hereditary rights of various kinds over their territory. However, the rights of this class of people was evolving and undergoing changes throughout the medieval period. The indigenous population of the region originally consisted of Kolis and Bhils. The Bhils were geographically marginalized with the emergence of the Rajputs such as the Solankis, Waghelas, etc. The Rajputs subsequently established a relatively centralized political authority in the region. Thus, the process of subverting these smaller polities and extracting tribute as a mark of over lordship started. Since then at least two levels of authority came into being. There was a constant tussle between this local group and the new rulers. This tussle got magnified with the establishment of the Sultanate of Gujarat that wanted to control the entire region centrally. It was at this juncture that the system of *wanta* (*bantha*) and *tilpad*, demarcating the revenue share was introduced by

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326 The term Rajput has been used here with certain reservations. These groups called themselves by their clan names: Parmars, Chauhans,Gohel, Jethwas, Jadejas, etc.before the Mughal period. This is very clearly evident from the inscriptions found in various parts of Gujarat where the clan names alone are mentioned. It is from the time of the Mughals that they were termed as Rajputs and by implication, *kshatriyas*. I am grateful to Professor S. Hasan Mahmud for pointing out this fact to me.

the Sultans as a compromise.[327] The local rulers were left with superior rights over one fourth of their lands (*bantha*), while the Sultans exercised his rights over the remaining three-fourth part (*tilpad*). The same system continued under the Mughals. With the establishment of the Maratha sway *salami* was levied on the smaller *wanta* chieftains to the north and the east of Ahmedabad.[328] This was collected through *mulkgiri* expeditions. Following the decline of Mughal power and the Maratha expansion these *zamindar*s attempted to augment their possessions. The Chiefs of Saurashtra were benefited the most. In Gujarat mainland, smaller *wanta* holders established claims (*giras*) in the revenues of neighbouring villages, something similar to the Maratha *chauth*.

The nature of polity amongst these chieftaincies was based on the lines of *Bhayad*, loosely translated as 'Brotherhood' in the English sources. These polities were largely clan based. The law of primogeniture prevailed in case of succession to the chieftaincy. The younger members of the family were entitled to a share in the territory for their subsistence. This was known as giras, literally meaning a mouthful, and its holder a *girasia*, also called *bhoomia* and sometimes *thakurda*. Within their *giras* the *girasia*s were absolute sovereigns and the chief made no interference in its internal matters of administration. The Girasias were only duty bound to furnish their chief with military aid in case of war. In Kutch they gave no annual monetary *nazrana* to their chief but in Saurashtra it was customary to give a certain amount of annual *nazrana*. This was to defray the tribute that was levied by

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327 A.K.Forbes, *Rasmala,* Vol: II, Oxford, Pp. 270-271.
328 Walter Hamilton, op.cit., P. 607.

the superior powers.[329] This *bhayad* system of dividing the sovereign rights led to acute fragmentation. It also led the younger and more dynamic and impoverished *girasias* to resort to loot and plunder; such *girasias* that plundered others' *giras* were called *bharwatio*. The outlaws were driven by a sense of deprivation and an inflated idea of honour, and they were glorified and eulogized in local ballads.[330] They were referred to as *Lutero* (looter) in a sense meaning a hero. This practice was widespread during this period and it led to much disturbance.

The term *giras* has two meanings. The first was the hereditary right of the younger clan member in the revenue of the Principality. This kind of *giras* and the *girasia* were considered honourable. However, due to the acute fragmentation of the *girasia* rights the younger *girasias* received less amount of subsistence in land. This fact coupled with their zeal for expansion made these *girasias* expand their areas of activity and lay claim to a share of revenue in their neighbouring villages. These villages happened to be *rasti* or peaceful villages as against the *mewasi* or recalcitrant villages. Generally the *mewasi girasia* chiefs laid claims in the *rasti* villages. Such a claim was also called as *giras*, differentiated sometimes with a prefix *toda, i.e., toda-giras*. Because of the complete breakdown of the law and order of the region during the 18th century many *girasias* expanded their claim to *toda-giras*.

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329 James Mac Murdo, "An Account of Cutch and of the countries lying between Guzerat and the river Indus, from Anjar", 29th Sept, 1818, *Transactions of the Literary Society of Bombay*, Vol. II, 1820, Pp. 233-236.

330 C.A.Kincaid, *Outlaws of Kathiawad and other Studies*, Bombay, 1905, P.19. For similar tendencies in Andhra Pradesh see J.F.Richards and V.Narayan Rao, "Banditry in Mughal India: Historical and Folk perceptions", *IESHR*, Vol XVII, No. 1, 1980.

The major local principalities of Saurashtra and North Gujarat functioned on the lines of *bhayad*. This included Nawanagar, Bhavnagar, Porbandar, Dhrangadhra, Gondal, etc. in Saurashtra, as also Idar, Palanpur, etc in North Gujarat and Chhota Udaipur, Devgadh Bariya, and Rajpipla on the Eastern fringes of Gujarat. Since Nawanagar and Bhavnagar had expanded their areas of direct control at the expense of their own *girasia*s, the latter were never reconciled with the former. The British East India Company exploited this situation by supporting the *girasias* against these chieftains of the region and thus exert pressure on them.

In case of Kutch this situation was more complicated. Here, the *girasia*s were stratified entities. A class of them called *teelat*s had their own sub-*girasia*s. These sub-*girasia*s were duty bound to render military assistance to their respective *teelat*s and not to the Maharao directly. Thus, a hierarchy within hierarchy had emerged amongst the *girasias* in Kutch. The Maharao did not have any control over these sub-*girasia*s. The *teelat*s respected the autonomy of their sub-*girasia*s and did not intervene in their internal matters. Since the Maharao did not pay tribute to any higher authority such as the Marathas, the *girasia*s were not obliged to pay the annual *nazrana* to him.

Many of the principalities that came into being during the 18th Century were based on the *bhayad* system. It was due to this that we get three parallel lines of Gaekwad rule: one in Baroda which was regarded as the supreme authority; the second in Kadi and Nadiad which comprised of the *jagir* of Khande Rao, bestowed on him by Damaji Rao Gaekwad, and the third at Sankheda, held in *jagir* by

another member of the Gaekwad family. However, with the intervention of the British, the latter two *jagir*s were reverted to the Gaikwads of Baroda in 1802-3. The various Babi *nawabi*s can also be included into this category.

In this scenario of rapid changes taking place in political authority in different regions of Gujarat, various contending parties sought after the areas that were rich in revenue, both agricultural and non-agricultural. Let us consider the case of Bharuch. Since its inception Bharuch Nawabi was faced with danger from its neighbours. The Nawabi consisted of the Mughal *sarkar* of Bharuch including the port-town and the *pargana* of Bharuch, the *pargana*s of Ankleshwar, Hansot, Olpad, Amod and Jambusar. With Damaji Rao Gaekwad's offensive against Bharuch in 1741 the *pargana*s of Ankleshwar, Olpad, Hansot, Amod and Jambusar fell into Maratha hands. Before Damaji Rao could conquer Bharuch town itself a compromise was reached between him and Nek Nam Khan, the Nawab of Bharuch, at the behest of the Nizam. It was settled to assign 60% of the revenues of Bharuch to the Gaekwads and 40% was to be left with the Nawab. Since then the administration of the countryside was solely taken over by Gaekwad's *kamavisdars.* The administration of the *pargana* and the town of Bharuch were further shared between the *Nawab* and the Gaekwad *chauthia.* In 1752 the Gaekwad's territories in Gujarat were shared half-and-half between the Peshwa and the Gaekwads whereby the Peshwa came into the possession of the *pargana*s of Ankleshwar, Hansot, Olpad, Amod and Jambusar and the Gaekwads were left with the *pargana* and town of Bharuch. In the course of the 20 years

following 1741 division, the *Nawab* managed to lay a claim on the jama' of the Peshwa's *pargana*s of Jambusar and Amod through *Mulkgiri* expeditions.[331] He collected this share from the Rajas of the two places and presumably not from the Peshwa's *kamavisdar*s. Besides the Nawab and the Marathas, the local chieftains, mostly Kolis, also had a claim in the revenue of the countryside of Bharuch. The Raja of Rajpipla also levied *toda-giras* from 16 villages in Hansot and Bharuch *parganas*.[332]

The simultaneous exercise of revenue rights by several claimants led to frequent disputes and confrontations. Many such confrontations between the Nawabs of Bharuch and their neighbours are recorded in our sources.[333] The nature and frequency of these conflicts brings forth the instability experienced by the Bharuch Nawabi. There was an instance during the rule of Nawab Hasan Ali Khan of Bharuch when the Surat Nawab, Hafiz Masud Khan, in collusion with an Ijaradar of Ankleshwar, Mianji, had conspired to capture Bharuch.[334] Similarly, in 1761 the Peshwa sent orders to chastise the Nawab of Bharuch for attempting to take over Amod from the Peshwa's *kamavisdar,* which was however averted after Govind Rao Gaekwad assured the Peshwa of tackling the Nawab.[335] This incident occurred immediate to the defeat of the Marathas in the third battle of Panipat, when the various Nawabs of Gujarat, as representatives of the Mughal Emperor, were ordered to conquer the

[331] *GOB II*, P.119.
[332] Walter Hamilton, op.cit., P. 713.
[333] Saeed Hasan, *Majmua-i-Danish*, op.cit., Vol. I, p. 4 & Vol. II, p. 35
[334] *MD III*, f. 42 in *HOB*, Pp. 25-28.
[335] P.M.Joshi (ed), *Selections from the Peshwa Daftar*, Vol. III, Revival of Maratha power, Bombay, 1962, Lt.224, P.271.

territories under Maratha control.[336] Another major confrontation took place in 1768 between Muazzaz Khan and Shripat Rao, Peshwa's *kamavisdar* of Amod. Two actions of Shripat Rao brought about this conflict. In the process of revenue collection expedition in Amod the Nawab was attempting to get a *muchalka* from the zamindar of that place through Azam Rana, *patel* of a village. Shripat Rao interfered in the matter and invited Azam Rana for negotiations but imprisoned him, despite having promised a safe conduct earlier. He also extracted a sum of Rs. 5,000 from Azam Rana. In addition Shripat Rao also collected revenues from the villages of Bharuch pargana, which did not fall in his jurisdiction. Because of the behaviour of Shripat Rao Muazzaz Khan revoked the surety of Khandoji Sainkar, given earlier for the Nawab's good behaviour (i.e., to not encroach on the other party's rights).[337] In retaliation the Nawab carried away the cattle belonging to the *pargana*s of Shripat Rao. This seems to have alarmed Shripat Rao who unable to bear the expenses of Sibandi, implored the Nawab for negotiations.[338] However the matter was settled through a battle in which Shripat Rao was defeated.[339] Similarly, a battle took place between Fatehsing and Muazzaz Khan, when in 1770 Fatehsing Rao Gaekwad's officers collected revenues without informing the Nawab. Fatehsing Rao further made the Nawab's officers accept his claim to more revenues than was collected.[340] It seems that collecting one's share of revenues without

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336 *Mirat*, P. 923.
337 *MD III*, f.101 in *HOB*, P. 47.
338 Ibid. P.48.
339 Kishore Das Munshi, *Majmua-e-Danish*, transl. Saeed Hasan, Allahabad, 1957, Lt: 16, Pp. 33- 36.
340 *MD III*, Lt: 151 in *HOB*,P.55.

informing the other claimant was considered an illegitimate act and would be a cause of conflict. It is understood that in such cases there were chances that the party that proceeded on *Mulkgiri* would extract more than its due share. The *patel*s and the *desai*s also refused to settle the *jamabandi* unless representatives of both parties concerned were present. Following the first British expedition of Bharuch the ryots of Bharuch were apprehensive of another attack and refused to pay the *jama'*. Lallubhai therefore asked Fatehsing Rao Gaekwad to address letters to the *desai*s to placate them and reassure them of Gaekwad support in safeguarding their interests.[341]

With the British conquest of Bharuch the conflicts between the new rulers of Bharuch and the Gaekwads with regard to their respective shares in Bharuch had begun. However, diplomacy and not force was used to resolve these conflicts. The reason for this was that Fatehsing Rao Gaekwad wanted to remain friendly with the British, in who he saw a powerful ally against the highhanded behaviour of the Peshwa. On the other hand, Anglo-Peshwa relations before the first Anglo-Maratha war were not hostile, if not exactly friendly. They both did not want to antagonize each other unnecessarily. In an incident that occurred immediately after the British conquered Bharuch in 1772, we see a confrontation between Fatehsing Rao Gaekwad and the British Factors at Bharuch. Immediate after the British takeover of Bharuch, Fatehsing Rao Gaekwad arrived in the vicinity of Bharuch with a large force to settle his rights in Bharuch with the British on the same terms as it existed during the times of the

[341] *GOB II*, P.15.

Nawabs.[342] The British, on the other hand, attempted to reduce the number of claimants on the revenues they had to share with. Accordingly, they tried to induce Fatehsing Rao Gaekwad to accept a certain sum of money in lieu of his claims on Bharuch revenues.[343] This did not work. After much procrastination the Bharuch Factors admitted Fatehsing Rao's claims, but only for one year.[344] With the commencement of the first Anglo-Maratha war almost immediately, the renewal of the agreement could not be done by the British and matters stood where they were.

In 1773 another dispute took place, this time between the Peshwa's *Kamavisdar*s and British Factors at Bharuch. While Mr. Mostyn was at Poona in the capacity of the Company's ambassador, he was asked for certain clarifications by the Poona *darbar*. It was complained that the British officers at Bharuch had collected an amount of Rs. 17,000 from the *'amaldar* of Amod and were demanding an additional amount of Rs. 6,000 for the expenses of the expedition carried out by them. The Poona *durbar* demanded that the Company return the amount collected and release the prisoners. Upon inquiry it was found that the peshwa's *'amaldar*s had refused to pay what was rightfully due to the Company and to enforce that right the Factors sent a force. It was only just that the charges for such an expedition be defrayed by the *'amaldar*s. This argument seems to have convinced the Poona *darbar* and the matter was not pursued

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342 Ibid. Pp. 119 & 126.
343 Ibid. P.121.
344 Ibid. P.140.

further.[345] Besides, Poona did not want to end diplomatic relations with the Company, who could have proved a dangerous enemy in the wake of the disorderly conditions at Poona following the death of Peshwa Madhavrao I.[346] At about the same time the Poona darbar made another complaint, again in relation to Bharuch Factors. It was alleged that the Bharuch Factors were demanding a share in the revenues of Hansot and Ankleshwar and were threatening with reprisals in case of non-compliance. The Peshwa's representative insisted that none of the two *pargana*s ever paid anything before to Bharuch, as they were always under the jurisdiction of Surat. The British demanded revenues of these places, both from Surat and Bharuch.[347] The Maratha officer (*chitnis*) informed Mr. Mostyn that the above *pargana*s were absolutely under Surat's authority and they paid Rs. 20 to 21 thousand annually and Bharuch had no claim on either. The Nawab of Bharuch had reportedly coerced these places to pay him some amount since five-six years back. This, the Poona *darbar* asserted, was no ground for the British claims.[348] In August the same year another complaint was received at Poona where the Bharuch Factors were accused of threatening the *'amaldar* of *Olpad* and demanding a present in the form of money,[349] hay and provisions.[350] In reply the Bharuch Factors asserted that they intended to take only that part which formerly belonged to the *Nawab* and that they repeatedly sent envoys to ask the *kamavisdar* to cooperate. The

345 *Mostyn's Diary,* Pp. 175-176
346 Ibid.
347 Ibid. P.180.
348 Ibid. Pp. 180-181.
349 Ibid. P.195.
350 Ibid. P.196.

kamavisdar (also referred to as *pandit* in English sources) in charge of Olpad did not respond despite several communications. He also had held the *patels* in the small-fortified village, which made it imperative for the British to take action. In the process the *kamavisdar* fled. According to the British Factors at Bharuch *"...the nabobs demand on these places was not, we beg leave to observe, founded in violence; but these provinces as well as Amod and Jambusar actually appertained in former times to Broach, and stand so on the Mogals books to this day. The Peshwa and the Gaiqua (Gaekwad) therefore have been the unjust usurpers of those countries, and by violence stripped this government of them..."*[351]

The above statement indicates that the basis of revenue claims was Mughal and the *jamabandi* was settled according to the revenue records of the Mughal times. It is curious also to observe the British refer to the Marathas as 'usurpers' of the Nawab's rights when they themselves had no scruples in conquering Bharuch from the Nawab.

At Surat too the Marathas administered the parganas[352] and the Nawab had to share the town administration with the Maratha *chauthia*, in addition to the English East India Company since their occupation of the castle in 1759. So, in effect, the authority was extremely fragmented in the town, with the English being a major power there since 1759.[353] The revenues of Surat were divided into three parts: one part being assigned to the Nawab, another to the holder of the castle and the third part went to the Marathas called

351 Ibid. Pp. 214-218.
352 See chapter III.
353 V.G. Hatalkar, op.cit., Pp. 71-72.

chauth. The Marathas further divided it into two equal parts between the Gaekwads and the Peshwa. The position in the *pargana*s was even more complex. There were local chiefs like that of Dharampur, Mandvi, etc, who also had established their rights on the revenues of their respective areas. Hence revenue sharing in the *pargana*s was extremely fragmented. In fact the existence of representatives of several authorities at the place of collection of customs duties, according to a French officer, was one of the reasons that scared away foreign merchants who saw a hoard of inspectors when their goods entered the town.[354] Surat too experienced frequent disputes between the above-mentioned three contenders. The parties who failed to meet their claims in Surat resorted to disruption of trade in the town. The Marathas *chauthia*s frequently went out of the town and stopped provisions and goods from entering the fortified areas of the town. This inconvenience prodded the Nawab to negotiate the issue on hand. The British too made similar attempts but on Sea. They had taken control of the 'Mullah Gate' or Seafarer's Gate, at the mouth of the river Tapi, from where the goods would be loaded on Ships for overseas trade. In 1752 and in 1758-59 the British Factors stopped the trade of the town for almost one year because of which the Nawab was forced to listen to their grievances. At Cambay also, the Peshwa and the Nawab governed the town jointly. The Nawab frequently sought British help to thwart frequent Maratha attempts to capture the portions of the town that did not belong to the Marathas. The Gaekwad exercised claims of *ghasdana* on Cambay.

[354] Ibid.

To understand another kind of disputes we will now revert to Bharuch. While the English Factors were dealing with the various disputes relating to the Marathas, another development put the Bharuch Factors in dilemma. Early in January 1774 Govind Rao Gaekwad, Fatehsing Rao Gaekwad's brother and a rival claimant to the Gaekwad's *gaddi* was made the rightful successor to the *gaddi* of Baroda by Raghunath Rao, the new Peshwa.[355] Govind Rao immediately set out with a large army to Gujarat. He encamped near Bharuch. Simultaneously Fatehsing Rao also encamped in the vicinity of Bharuch to stop Govind Rao from entering the region. The Factors at Bharuch were apprehensive that the prospective battle would be fought in their *pargana*s which would have naturally reduced their revenues. The Factors resorted to diplomacy and asked Govind Rao to not enter their *pargana*s. Govind Rao on the other hand asked the Factors to not permit Fatehsing Rao to collect revenues from Bharuch *pargana*s.[356] The British treated this issue as a dispute between the two brothers although the villages were getting affected. In the subsequent battle Fatesing Rao was defeated and he fled to Baroda fort. While the matters were in this state, the British planned to induce the Surat Nawab to recover as many *pargana*s as he could into his control, earlier taken by the Marathas, since the Marathas (Gaekwads) were at war with each other.[357] The Bombay authorities wished to remain neutral in reply to Govind Rao's solicitations but advised the Factors to support that party which is strongest for the purpose of

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355 Govind Rao was given the *gaddi* in place of Sayaji Rao Gaekwad, whose regent was Fatehsing Rao. Sayaji Rao was of a weak personality and therefore all power in the Gaekwad chieftaincy rested with Fatehsing Rao.

356 *GOB II*, P.180.

357 Ibid. P.183.

revenue collection.[358] However, Govind Rao had by then come to control the entire countryside and Fatehsing was holed up in Baroda. The British Factors therefore received Govind Rao's *chauthia* in place of Fatehsing Rao's *chauthia.*[359] In the meanwhile Raghunath Rao had to flee under British protection against the Poona *darbar*. The struggle for Bharuch between the Gaekwad brothers was subsumed within the larger battle of the first Anglo-Maratha war. This situation led to another dispute regarding the actual political status of the Gaekwad vis-à-vis the Peshwa.

The context in which the vexed issue of the Gaekwad-Peshwa relationship was discussed by the British authorities is as follows: While the negotiations for supporting Raghoba by the Bombay presidency was afoot, he was asked to alienate certain lands, especially the Maratha share of Bharuch's revenues. This, the British Factors found, was not to be given by Raghoba as it belonged to Gaekwad chief and only he had the right to alienate his lands.[360] It was accordingly decided to make Raghoba obtain the grant of these revenues from the Gaekwad for the English.[361] In the Treaty of Surat, territories falling between Bombay and Bharuch were received by British but excluding the Gaekwad's share.[362] It is to be remembered that Raghoba made these cessations as the rightful Peshwa and the British planned to put him in the Peshwa's office through this war.

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358 Ibid. P.188.

359 Ibid. Pp. 224-225. It is not explicitly mentioned as to when Govind Rao's chauthia was allowed to undertake his duties but by the time the Poona ministers' army was pursuing Raghoba we find Govind Rao,s chauthia in Bharuch requesting the English for aid.

360 Ibid. P.201.

361 Ibid. Pp. 216-217.

362 Ibid. 5th Article in the Treaty of Surat, P. 250.

The cessations so obtained would then have become legal. He also promised to procure *sanads* from the Gaekwad granting his shares as well.[363] Later, Fatehsing also became a party in the alliance against the ministers at Poona and made over several cessations like Koral, Chikli, Variav and Batta. This process was stopped midway due to the interference of Bengal and Col. Upton was sent as envoy to Poona. As truce was declared between the English and the Marathas, and with Warren Hastings' invalidating the Treaty of Surat, one would have believed that the cessations made by Fatehsing Rao would have reverted back to him. However, Warren Hastings categorically asked the Bombay Presidency to retain the possession of the Gaekwad's share of Bharuch revenues along with above-mentioned areas until a peace treaty was concluded.[364] Hastings was probably pressurized to make this order, as the Bombay Presidency was unwilling to hand over its gains.

While Col. Upton was in Poona the ministers refused to acknowledge Gaekwad's right to alienate territories and asserted that he was a mere vassal of the Peshwa and that Gujarat was his *jagir* and as such he had no right to alienate it without permission from the Peshwa. Following this, a spate of correspondence was exchanged

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[363] Ibid. 6th Article in the treaty of Surat.

[364] *GOB II*,Pp. 322-323. Here let us consider the meaning of the term jagir in this context. The very idea of jagir in Maratha terminology sounds vague and is used in several formal grants of territories. In 1752 when the Marathas conquered Ahmedabad from Jawan Mard Khan he was given the parganas of Patan, Sami, Munjpur, Kheralu and others as jagir as per the settlement. This was inspite of the fact that the Marathas could not capture Ahmedabad even after prolonged siege and had to take its possession through negotiations.Similarly Cambay and Petlad were given as jagir to Momin Khan IIin 1758-59, this too after a prolonged siege of Ahmedabad in 1758-59. It is interesting also considering that these Nawabs claimed independence from the Marathas and their legitimacy from the Mughal Emperor directly and the Marathas had failed to conquer these areas from the Nawabs.

between Bombay, Calcutta and Poona where each party asserted its own point of view. The Bombay authorities and Surat Factors asserted the independent status of Gaekwad but Calcutta was adamant to treat the Peshwa as the undisputed head of Maratha polity. Col. Upton had expressed orders to please Poona and as such Bombay's claims fell on deaf ears. For Fatehsing Rao Gaekwad the alliance of Bombay was important to save his own position against Govind Rao and, therefore, he supported Bombay's claims, although later we find Fatehsing Rao acknowledging his position as a *jagirdar* of the Peshwa and declared his possessions as a *jagir.*[365] Bombay authorities, however, refused to acknowledge Poona's point of view. They quoted several instances where the Gaekwad had earlier undertaken decisions of sovereign nature on his own and without referring to the Peshwa. They said that the district of Variav was ceded to the English since 1759.[366] Similarly, when the British conquered Bharuch, Fatehsing Rao concluded a treaty with the English safeguarding his share of revenues in Bharuch with no reference to the Peshwa. The Poona *Darbar* too did not raise objections to this, even though Mr. Mostyn, the English envoy, was at Poona at that time.[367] Earlier, in 1772 according to an agreement concluded between Sayaji Rao-Fatehsing Rao and Madhav Rao Peshwa, the Gaekwads asked permission to undertake operations against the Nawabs of Gujarat and enlarge their own domain. The Peshwa categorically said that he was not concerned with the areas in

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365 *GOB III*, Pp. 22-23.

366 Ibid. Pp. 2-4.

367 *GOB II*, P.24.

the Gaekwad's share of territories.[368] On the basis of this set of evidence, Calcutta authorities permitted Bombay to keep possession of the territories ceded to them until the ministers, as per a clause in the Treaty of Purandhar, provided a more viable proof of the Gaekwad's dependence on Poona.[369] This issued got prolonged.

The Maratha sources on the other hand seem to support the claims of Poona ministers. It may be worthwhile to briefly take stock of the developments that had determined the position of the Gaekwads in the Maratha polity. Umabai Dabhade appointed Damaji Rao as the *mamlatdar* of Gujarat after Pilaji Rao's death.[370] In 1752 when Balaji Baji Rao Peshwa had imprisoned Damaji Rao Gaekwad and demanded surrender of half his territories in Gujarat he stated his status as being merely a *mutaliq* or deputy of Dabhades.[371] With the death of Shahu in 1749 and the defeat of the rival party in Maratha politics the Peshwa had emerged as the supreme authority. In the partition treaty of 1752 we find the Peshwa granting half of Maratha territories of Gujarat to the Gaekwad in his own name.[372] Since then the official documents refer to the Peshwa as the *sarkar*. Thus, it is possible that the Peshwa was the accepted overlord of the Gaekwad but the inherent rift between the two made Gaekwad aspire for freedom from his tutelage. It is also possible that alienation of lands was a part of the Gaekwad's right as a *sardar* who single-handedly conquered the whole province and therefore was not usually interfered

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368 Ibid. Pp.15-16.
369 Ibid.
370 *HSBSR-I*, Lt: 28, P. 21.
371 *Baroda State Gazetteer*, Pp. 452-453.
372 *HSBSR I*, P. 52.

with by the Peshwa. This was an important characteristic of the Maratha polity during this period where the Peshwa was lenient with *sardars* who operated on their own outside *swarajya*.[373] In this particular case the Poona ministers were apprehensive of the rise of Bombay as a counterpoise to their own power in western India and therefore sought to curb Bombay's territorial ambitions. The issue was settled in the Treaty of Salbai in 1782 in favour of Poona *Darbar* and the British had to return the *parganas* ceded earlier. Bharuch also was taken from Fatehsing Rao by Poona, possibly to make their point, and given as a gift to the English for peace settlements. The British in turn gave it to the Sindhia. Thus, Gaekwad's position as the vassal of Peshwa was reaffirmed.

As mentioned elsewhere, the British East India Company wanted to reduce the number of claimants to revenues in areas controlled by it. In pursuance of this ambition they introduced a clause in the Treaty of Kundhela (concluded during the first Anglo-Maratha war) whereby territories conquered from the Peshwa in Gujarat was proposed to be partitioned in such a way that the Gaekwad and the English had sole possession of their respective shares.[374] According to this agreement the British were to receive territories in the south around Surat and Bharuch, while the Gaekwads would be given the territories in the North, comprising Ahmadabad and other areas.

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373 Swarajya was the term used for the areas originally conquered by Shivaji as distinct from the Moglai or Mughal's areas that were conquered by the Maratha sardars subsequently. Swarajya formed the core area of the Maratha Kingdom. In Moglai areas the revenue rights were shared with the Mughals.

374 *GOB III*, 5th article in the Treaty of Kundhela, P. 96.

MULKGIRI

The British east India Company became a direct party with territorial rights in Saurashtra in 1803 with their taking possession of the four districts of Gogha, Ranpur, Dholka and Dhandhuka, obtained from the Peshwa through the Treaty of Bassein. This later became Kaira collectorate. They found the political situation in the region to be a complex one. They made efforts to understand the nature of Maratha relations with the smaller chieftains of Saurashtra and Mahi-Kantha-Rewa Kantha (North Gujarat) regions. The Marathas had been conducting annual *mulkgiri* or revenue collection expeditions into these regions. The chiefs were obliged to pay a *khandani* (tribute) and accept the Marathas as overlords. The amount of *khandani* varied from year to year and depended on the resistance power of the chiefs as well as the force at the command of the tribute collectors. For all practical purposes these chiefs were free to manage their chieftaincies without any interference from their Maratha overlords.

The Maratha *mulkgiri* claims consisted of two parts, one *jamabandi* and other *kharajat.*[375] *kharajat* consisted of many perquisites, *ghasdana* being an important perquisite reserved for the *sardar* who conducted the *mulkgiri* campaign. Prior to the introduction of the British, the Marathas had principally the right to interfere in settling succession disputes; punish offenders; deal with

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[375] It is the corrupt word for *ikhrajat*, an established head of revenue under the Mughals. Baroda State Gazetteer, P.665.

lawless elements; oversee the maintenance of internal peace by the local chiefs etc.[376] The Gaekwads came to exercise these rights in a more definite way after the British entry into Saurashtra. The British recognised the rights of the Gekwads to exercise control over the chieftains of the region as it was also in their interest. Vithalrao Devaji, the Gaekwad *sarsubah* obtained a footing in the region by capturing Amreli town and expanding the Gaekwad possessions in the peninsula after 1804. The British could not do this directly since they had no legitimate authority to interfere in the region; they were content to be seen as an ally of the Gekwads. It was only after the transfer of Peshwa's territories in Gujarat to the Company in 1817-18 that the British servants came to exercise direct control.

Major Alexander Walker, who has made important observations on the nature of sovereignty in Saurashtra, notes that the chieftains of Saurashtra were indifferent during the transition of their over lordship from the Mughal to the Maratha governments. They paid *jama'* to whoever possessed the local authority in the area and that neither Nawabs nor the Marathas interfered in their internal matters. The only activity they undertook was the *mulkgiri* expeditions, which in the course of time established their own conventions. Accordingly, when the Maratha *mulkgiri* force appeared in Saurashtra, all fights amongst the local chiefs were to stop. In case any chieftain did not comply with this rule, the Marathas levied a fine on that chief. Similarly, upon the appearance of the force on the borders of a principality the local chief was required to send his *vakil*s

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376 C.U.Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads,* Vol:. VI, Calcutta, 1932, Pp. 80-81.

or *karbharis* to settle his tribute. After this, he had to leave a few soldiers there to tell any other *mulkgiri* party that settlement has already been made. This saved them from the possible loot and plunder. This practice was called *bhandar*. In case a chief refused to settle his tribute, the *mulkgiri* forces would ravage the territory and compel the chief to make a settlement.[377]

The practice of *mulkgiri* was not confined to the Marathas alone. The Nawab of Junagadh had an equal right to *mulkgiri* in Saurashtra.[378] The *pargana*s of Salem, Banthali, Veraval, Patan, Div, Kutiana, Bhad, Miari, Aliah, Biarej, Chorwad, Sutrapada, Kodinar, Una, Delwada were directly ruled by the Nawab. In the *pargana*s of Mangrol, Jetpur, Jhanapoli, Rampur, Bagasra, Bilkha, Sil Bandar, Veraval and Amreli he had to share the *mulkgiri* revenue with other claimants.[379] Besides the various principalities of Saurashtra, Junagadh's claim to *mulkgiri* extended well into the provinces of Jhalawad, Dhandhuka, Ranpur and Gogha (in Ahmadabad *sarkar*). In Saurashtra it extended up to Hallad, Machu Kantha, etc.[380] In 1821 there were 193 different principalities in Saurashtra, out of which 134 including Bhavnagar, Nawanagar, Porbandar, Morbi and Dhrangadhra paid *zortalabi* (the equivalent of the Maratha *khandani*) to Junagadh.[381] In addition to *zortalabi*, the Nawab also collected *ghasdana* like the Marathas. According to the *Tarikh-i-Sorath*, Saurashtra was divided into 188 separate states during the British

377 *Walker-Selections XXXIX*, Pp. 269-272.
378 Ibid. P.272.
379 *Tarikh-i-Sorath*, P.33.
380 *Walker-Selections*, P.273.
381 Barnewall's report to Govt, 31st Oct, 1821, c.f. *The Babi rulers of Sorath*, Junagadh State Press, 1903, P. 4.

times, out of which 13 did not pay any tribute, 96 paid the tribute to the British and 70 to Gaekwads and 9 to both. Out of 188 principalities, 132 paid *zortalabi* to Junagadh as well.[382] In addition the chiefs of Bhavnagar, Nawanagar and Wadhwan also conducted *mulkgiri* and collected tribute from their *bhayad* as also from the smaller chiefs in the neighbourhood. In Mangrol the Raja of Mangrol and Junagadh Nawab jointly exercised revenue rights.[383] Mian Badr-ud-Din who had come to administer Mangrol after driving out the Marathas in 1748 also had a share in the revenue of the place. Besides, he collected tribute from Keshod, Chorwad, Kodinar, Patan, Porbandar, etc.[384]

The extent of fragmentation of the revenue rights in central Saurashtra can be had from some statistics available with us. In 1803 the Company officers found that in Dhanduka there were 103 villages out of which 26 villages sought protection from Bhavnagar and 26 from the chief of Limdi. All 103 villages paid *jama'* to the Company (they had earlier paid that to the Peshwa) but owed no other obligation.[385] In case of Ranpur only the Qasba of Ranpur and 3 *rasti* villages comprised Company's areas of direct authority; the rest were under their respective *girasias* who ruled independently.[386] The *girasias* again paid a fixed sum as tribute to Bhavnagar, Limdi and Wadhwan for protection against depredations.[387] Similarly, in Gogha the Company had direct rule in the town of Gogha and 2 *rasti* villages

382 *Tarikh-i-Sorath*, P.2.
383 Ibid. Pp. 57-58.
384 Ibid. P.53.
385 *Walker-Selections XXXIX*, P. 16.
386 Ibid. P. 18.
387 Ibid. P.19.

whereas 59 villages belonged to Bhavnagar and 86 to *girasia*s. There were in total 84 villages.[388] In fact, although Gogha district belonged to the Company the Bhavnagar Raja was acknowledged as the principal sovereign in most parts. He was one of the *girasia*s of the area. The *girasia*s on the other hand paid *mulkgiri* tribute to the Marathas and Junagadh besides the *jama'* to the Company.[389] The Bhavnagar chief had a share in the customs of the Gogha port as well.[390] Thus, Alexander Walker observes that 'it is difficult to point out a single paramount power in the region, as the authority was divided extremely' but asserts that no dispute arose between the various claimants as each party received its due share without any conflict.[391]

In mainland areas as well, multiple claims to tribute were established in the course of the Century. This was more pronounced in the areas referred to as Rewa-Kantha and Mahi-Kantha in British sources. These areas were called *mewasi* areas in Maratha sources. In extreme north as also on the eastern fringes of the region, multiple claims to revenues had come into being. In the Rewa Kantha Agency, the British had recognized 6 large and 55 small states. Amongst the large states were Chota Udepur, Sunth, Devgadh Bariya, Rajpipla, Lunawada and Balasinor.[392] Mahi-Kantha comprised of 59 states.[393] Lunawada paid tribute to Gaekwads, Sindhias[394] and Babis of

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388 Ibid. P. 20.
389 Ibid. P. 21.
390 Ibid.
391 Ibid.
392 *Bom. Pres. Gaz- Rewa kantha*, op.cit., Pp. 1-2.
393 Ibid. *Mahi-Kantha*, Pp. 355-356.
394 *GOB VI*, P. 93.

Balasinor.[395] Bhameria and Kanjeri principalities similarly paid tribute to both Gaekwads and Sindhias. [396]Devgadh Bariya, however, resisted the attempts of the Sindhia to a claim in its revenues and instead itself had a claim on the revenues of Dohad, Halol and Kalol, areas in the Panch Mahal district that were under Sindhia's management.[397] At Palanpur the Peshwa, Holkar and the Gaekwads levied tribute.[398] The Nawab of Radhanpur was a vassal of Palanpur, and the chiefs of Wagad district in Kutch were in turn vassals of the Nawab of Radhanpur.[399] The Panch Mahals in eastern Gujarat was under the authority of the Sindhia and Godhra was the administrative headquarter of the district. Dungarpur and Banswara in north-eastern Gujarat were tributary to the Powars of Dhar.[400] Idar and Balasinor undertook *mulkgiri* expeditions on surrounding areas occasionally. The Idar chief too undertook *Mulkgiri* expeditions and also levied a cess called *khichree*, similar to Maratha *ghasdana*, which was formally recognized as a right and thus safeguarded by the British in the revenue settlements.[401] They also paid tribute to the *mulkgiri* forces of Sindhia and Holkar but were otherwise independent sovereigns in their own right.[402] These figures, by no means complete, give an idea of the extent and the range of fragmentation of revenue collection rights in 18th century Gujarat.

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395 *Bom.Pres.Gaz-Rewa Kantha,* op.cit., P. 128.
396 *GOB VI,* P. 93.
397 Ibid. P.119.
398 *Bom. Pres. Gaz-Palanpur,* op.cit., P. 321.
399 Walter-Hamilton, op.cit., Pp. 629-630.
400 *GOB VI,* Pp. 92-93.
401 *Selections-Mahee Kantha*, op.cit., P.6.
402 *GOB VI,* P. 100.

PROTECTION

In this highly fragmented polity in Gujarat and the struggle amongst various contenders for territorial gains at the expense of the other created conditions where various sections of society, including functionaries of the state, sought protection from another power in times of distress. Hence, we find members of the mercantile and business community such as merchants and bankers, superior land right holders like the *patels* and the *desais* as also nobles and officials of a territory seeking protection of some outside power against their own chiefs. Sometimes it was designed to further their vested interests. We are citing here some of such examples.

Immediately after the British conquest of Bharuch, Lallubhai took the protection of Fatehsing Rao Gaekwad and refused to go over to the British. He was considered to be an important official, being the *diwan* of the Nawab, and was also the *desai* and *ijaradar* of agriculturally fertile Bharuch *pargana*. Strong securities and counter securities, assuring a safe conduct were given by the British East India Company to secure the person of Lallubhai.[403] Another case was of Rudraji *desai* of Chorasi *pargana* who had fled from Gaekwad's service and without settling his accounts. He sought the protection of the British at Surat and was appointed the '*amaldar* of Chikli. The Gaekwad demanded that Rudraji be made over to him, as he was his

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403 *GOB III*, Pp. 127 & 149.

servant.[404] Similarly, in 1790 Manaji Rao Gaekwad, who succeeded Fatehsing Rao, accused the English Chief of Surat and the Nawab of Surat, of giving refuge to one Bhimaji Bhaskar, the *sarsubah* of Navsari, who had owed large amounts to the Gaekwads. To this the Bombay authorities reminded Manaji Rao of a certain Maratha treaty of 1739 whereby he was required to furnish proofs against the said person for the Nawab to hand him over. Later the Surat chief was authorized to deal with the issue though we do not know the end result.[405] Another significant case is that of Muncherji, the *desai* of Navsari. Kanhoji imprisoned Muncherji's family with the intention of extracting money from him under some pretext. Muncherji sought the Company's help to intervene on his behalf as he was under its protection. He was released later with the British help. He, however, tried to bring down Kanhoji Rao from power and supported Raoba in bringing the British to power at Baroda.[406] Similarly, in Cambay Mohammad Quli, the successor of Momin Khan II, gave protection to one Tapidas, the *patel* of a Gaekwad village. Fatehsing Rao sent a force to get Tapidas and a fine of Rs. 15,000 was also levied on Cambay. Tapidas however fled to Bhavnagar.[407]

Besides individuals, the smaller principalities also sought protection from the bigger powers to safeguard their political interests. Thus in 1752 when Gujarat was divided between the Peshwa and the Gaekwads, the Nawab of Cambay sent his *peshkar* Brajlal to Poona requesting the Peshwa to collect the *chauth* from Cambay instead of

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404 Ibid. P.9.
405 Ibid. P. 169.
406 *GOB IV*, Pp. 39-40 & 43-44.
407 *Walker-Selections XXXIX*, P.81.

the Gaekwad. The Nawab hence was seeking protection of the Peshwa against the Gaekwads.[408] In 1782 the Vala Kathis of Gir, in possession of Visavadar and Chelna, sought protection of the Nawab of Junagadh against the more powerful kingdoms in Saurashtra and pledged revenues of half of their villages to the Nawab. In 1794 Nawab Mahabat Khan of Junagadh transferred Visavadar and Chelna districts to the Nawab of Bantwa for management as he found managing the turbulent Kathis a difficult job.[409] Junagadh however failed to protect these principalities from the encroachments of Bhavnagar and Nawanagar. Thus, the Kathi chiefs of Chital, Jasdan, Jetpur and Kundla applied for British protection in 1803 especially against Bhavnagar and Nawanagar.[410] In another case, the Peshwa gave Ballu Mian, the descendant of the Sidi of Janjira, the *jagir* of Satargam in Surat Athavisi in 1797, after taking over Janjira from the Sidi chief. The British stood as protector in the agreement. The Sidi later obtained a *sanad* from the Mughal Court and formed the Nawabi of Sachin.[411]

It could be seen that the British had emerged as the most sought after protectors in the region by the end of the 18th Century. This happened due to the increase in their political authority in the region. They now also acted as protectors to various principalities against bigger powers. Thus, through the *Treaty of* Salbai in 1782 the English

408 H.D.Robertson, *Historical Narrative of the city of Cambay* in *Selections from the Records of the Bombay Government,* XXVI, New Series, Bombay, 1856, P. 65.

409 C.A.Kincaid, op.cit., P.16.

410 *Walker-Selections XXXIX,* P.64.

411 W.H.Harrison, *Rough notes connected with Sachin estate in the Surat Collectorate,* in *Selections from the Records of the Bombay Government,* no. XXVI, New Series, Bombay, Pp. 26-27.

agreed to protect the Gaekwads against any kind of encroachments on their territories by the Peshwa. Consequently, when in 1795 Govind Rao took over the *gaddi* of Baroda and the Poona ministers tried to get the Gaekwad share of Surat *chauth* and Chorasi *pargana*, the British resident C.W. Malet intervened to stop it.[412] In fact after the conclusion of the treaty of Salbai the Peshwa addressed his objections with regard to the Gaekwads through the agency of the British. For instance, in 1785 the Peshwa complained against Fatehsing Rao to the Company saying he was neither paying tribute nor providing military aid and was also plundering the Peshwa's *mahal*s in Gujarat.[413] In 1793 Manaji Rao asked to be protected by the Company in case of an attack from his brother Govind Rao, referring to the treaty of Salbai. The Company though decided not to intervene in the internal affairs of the family on the advice of Malet, who held that Govind Rao would most probably succeed Manaji Rao who had no direct successors while Govind Rao had, Company's intervention would place it in a precarious position.[414] Protection to Manaji Rao was thus refused to safeguard the Company's interests.

INTERMEDIARIES

The intertwining of the revenue interests of various parties also provided scope for the emergence of intermediaries with diplomatic skills. The commercial agents like *modi*, *marfatia* and *vakil* existed

[412] *Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. II*, op.cit., P.
[413] *GOB III*, P. 156.
[414] *GOB III*, Pp. 179-181 & 182.

since earlier times facilitating the interaction of the foreign merchants and the East India Companies with the local officials. The 18th century however saw similar mediators emerging in the political sphere as well. Thus, the office of *peshkar*, comes to our notice. The nature of office of *peshkar* was earlier mundane revenue related one while during this period the functions of mediation came to be added, in addition to the revenue record keeping. Since the joint Mughal-Maratha rule came to be established at Ahmedabad the need to maintain accurate revenue accounts was felt by both sides. As both sides attempted to augment their own resources at the expense of the other, the *peshkar* became an important official. He also served as a link between the two parties. Some of them, like Balidas the *peshkar* of Najm-ud-Daula Momin Khan and also during the Niabat of Fida-ud-din Khan and Renkoji at Ahmedabad, could gain personal benefits because of his diplomatic skills.[415] The intermediary nature of the officer *peshkar* comes to our notice in certain other cases also. *Peshkar* Brajlal went to Poona to settle the *Chauth* affairs of Cambay Nawab.[416] Similarly Vajeram too was an influential *peshkar* of the Nawab of Cambay. *Desai* Surji, the *diwan* cum *peshkar* of Bhavnagar acted as an intermediary with the Maratha overlords of Bhavnagar and its neighbouring chiefs of Junagadh and Surat. [417] It seems that the post of *diwan* in case of these local principalities was vested in a person who was a combination of *peshkar*, *vakil* of sibandis and *desai* of fertile parganas. Surji was the *desai* of Gogha in addition to being a

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415 *Mirat*, P. 599.
416 *Mirat*, Pp. 753 & 768.
417 J.W.Watson, "Historical sketch of the town of Bhavnagar", *Indian Antiquary*, 1874, P.284.

vakil of the Arab *sibandis* as well.[418] The case was the same with Lallubhai of Bharuch and *diwan* Amarji of Junagadh and Mehraman Khawas of Nawanagar.

Sometimes temporary mediators were required. Thus, we find Dhanji Shaw Parsi mediating with Nawab Muazzaz Khan on behalf of English East India Company post the first English expedition on Bharuch. Later when the English had conquered Bharuch, Dhanji Shaw was again representing the Company with the Gaekwads while Fatehsing Rao Gaekwad sent Rudraji Bapu as his representative in the negotiations regarding the sharing of the revenues of Bharuch.[419]

Similar to the office of *peshkar* was that of the *karbhari. Karbhari* is a Marathi term used for intermediaries. This was an official position and the sole function of mediation was attached to a *karbhari.* A *karbhari*'s skills included knowledge of languages like Persian, Marathi, Gujarati and at times English and one of *karbhari*'s important functions included translations as well. Some *karbharis* enjoyed prominence as their services were considered to be important especially to a new power like the British East India Company towards the end of the 18th century. Gangadhar Shastri, the *karbhari* of Baroda, was one such high profile *karbhari* who was sent on the mission of persuading the Peshwa Baji Rao II to renew the *ijara* of his share of Gujarat's revenues to the Gaekwads in 1814. Triambak Danglia assassinated Gangadhar Shastri which became an antecedent to the third Anglo-Maratha war. Gangadhar Shastri also seems to have

418 He also had a banking firm in Gogha.
419 For Rudraji see *GOB II*, P. 127; for Dhanji Shaw GOB II, passim.

had several *vakils* or lesser agents under his authority in different towns. He had a *vakil* in Baroda and another in Poona to inform him of the developments there. It seems that the office of *Karbhari* as an independent diplomatic office came up with the introduction of British residency in Baroda.

In case of the local Principalities the agents were referred to as *vakils*. Different agents were employed for specific functions. For instance *vakils* of the *sibandis* looked after recruitment of the *sibandis*. Similarly political *vakils* worked as a link with the higher authorities on behalf of their master. They also negotiated with the higher powers in case of disputes and resolved conflicts. Thus in case of Khandani settlements the *vakils* negotiated with the higher authorities.[420]

Thus, the chaos resulting from the existence of multiple authorities during the 18th century was managed to some extent by these mechanisms.

420 *Walker-selections XXXIX.* Passim.

SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE SOCIAL CONDITIONS

We have noticed in the previous chapters that the breakdown of the Mughal authority created a situation of social unrest and insecurity in Gujarat in the 18th century. An attempt has been made in the following pages to understand the general effects of the unrest and the perceptions of the local people towards of that situation. We have also tried to understand the mechanisms by which they tried to meet the situation. In order to gauge the people's feelings of the effects of the invasions, we have analyzed the folk literature of the period, as we do not expect to get information on such a theme in the 'conventional' sources whose objective is very different. Some of the *garba*s written in this period provide an insight into our subject.

*Garba*s are the most popular and common form of poetical literature of Gujarat. These were composed and sung on important social occasions such as marriages, births and deaths. The *garbas* were predominantly associated with *Bhakti* and were usually prayers verses addressed to one or the other form of Goddess Amba. Some of them commemorated certain events that had a larger social bearing. These *garba*s thus are a useful source of information on the people's perception of events and situations; even though they do not provide elaborate information on the historical events. Also, *garba*s have

many forms, the *pavado* and the *shalakho* being the most common forms of eulogizing an event or a heroic feat. Though *shalakho* and *pavado* were distinct from each other, by our time the difference seems to have been narrowed down and the terms are used interchangeably.[421]

Before we take up the information in these *garbas*, it is necessary to explain the terms that occur in them. The Marathas are referred to as *ganim* (Arabic '*ghanim*', meaning 'plunderer'), an expression of disdain, in non-Marathi sources. English sources, for instance, refer to Shivaji as *ganim* (and his guerilla warfare as *ganim kava*), because he had plundered the city of Surat. Interestingly, the Marathi sources use this word to denote a 'hero'. Hence, the usage of the word *ganim* has opposite connotations in the Maratha and non-Maratha sources of the period. Now let us examine the garba work called *Ganim no Ladai no Pavado*, composed by Vishwanath Jani in 1706. This *garba* relates to the first major battle of the century between the Mughal officers of Gujarat and the Marathas under Dhana Jadhav in which the Mughals were routed. This work is a prayer sung to Goddess Ambika imploring her to protect Gujarat from the *ganim* (Marathas). The details in the *pavado* also corroborate the information in the conventional sources. This *pavado* contains 49 paragraphs; each paragraph is a four liner. Thus it says:[422]

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421 U Joshi, A Raval and Y Shukla (eds), *Gujarati sahityano Itihas*, Ahmedabad, 1976, Pp. 35-36.

422 In this chapter only a loose translation of the verses as been done as the intention was only to understand the Perceptions of the people.

Bhay lage ghano ganimna katakno

Vaghne sarvano nahi evo!

Jamna doot to pran laine vate

Anal taruaarno nahiye tevo! [423]

... [We are] very scared of the Ganim's valour

More than that of a Tiger!

The Jam's men (Yam, god of death) leave after they take life away

But the Ganim keeps coming back...

It further says that,

Ye amare shir thaliyo che ghani!

Te to gardho thayo nevo varshe!!

Te pratipalna nathi re shakto kari!

To amari sari te kon karshe?!!

The Emperor who is suppose to protect us

Has become an old man of 90 years,

He cannot look after us anymore

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423 Manjulal. R. Majmudar, Bachubhai Ravat, Manubhai Joghani (eds), *Gujarati Loksahityamala,* Vol. III, 1963, Ahmedabad, Pp. 273-282.

Who is going to take care of us then?

In another verse the *garba* informs us about the excessive revenues that were collected by the officers

Moghanu dukh ne megh aave nahin!
To tamara janya kyam jeve?!!
'jijiyo' le ghani, ganim mare ani!..

[We have] the sorrow of high prices and the rains do not come
You tell us how do we live?
The ruler takes more (taxes) and the Ganim kills...

The *garba* also states that nobody, meaning the officers, comes to oppose the Marathas. Referring to the battle of 1706, it says that it has been ages waiting, but no Subahdar came with an army to rescue the people from the Marathas and even the Diwan is in (Maratha) custody.

Vat jota bhuda maas ekaj thayo!
Ko subo naviyo sena layino!!
Khabar leye sheherni yehne diwanji!
Te becharo padya kaid thyine!![424]

[424] Ibid. P.298.

It has been ages waiting!

No suba (subahdar) came with an army!!

The Diwan who looks after the city (of Ahmedabad)!

He himself is imprisoned!!

Towards the end, it implores the Goddess to help the people of Gujarat as a *Khan* or a *Mir* (meaning the Mughal officers) alone cannot do anything.

Another *pavado* titled as *Rustam na Shalakho*, also known as *Ibrahim Quli no Pavado* was composed in 1725 by one Shamal Bhat of Ahmadabad's Begumpura. It is a versified version of the battle between Shuja'at Khan and Hamid Khan that took place in 1725. The Shuja'at Khan faction, consisting of three brothers, was very popular with the people of Gujarat. Their popularity is reflected in this *pavado*. Two parts of the text has been available for this study[425], one dealing with Shuja'at Khan and Ibrahim Quli Khan's death at Ahmadabad and the other dealing with Rustam Ali Khan's death in the 'battle of Aras'. The initial verses praise the three brothers and the effects of their administration in the following words:

...vado te veer shujaatyashan!!

Jene padshahima ati Ghana maan!

Anmi mehwasi jene vash kidha!!

[425] The verses pertaining to Ahmadabad has been extracted from a later work, R.B.Jote, *Gujaratnu Patnagar Ahmadabad*, Ahmedabad, 1929; while the part dealing with Surat have been taken from another 19th century work, Ishwarlal Icharam Desai, *Surat Sona ni Murat*, Surat, 1958.

Praja paline mota jash leedha!

"... The brave Shuja'at Khan,
the one who had great respect at the imperial court
The one who had controlled the Mehwasis,
and earned the goodwill of the people."

Then it goes further:

Tethi nanero Rustam kahiye!! Jena judhno par na lahiye!
Rupe rudone datar janu!! Sahuma shiroman tene vashanu!
Jehena naamthi taskar trase!! Dakshini gamin saat gao nase!
Tethi nanero madino jao!! Abhram kuli ladakwao!

"[the one] younger to him is called Rustam, I will now be describing him!
He was good to look at and exalted (shiroman) in every way!
Hearing his name the looters were scared away
Southern Ganims ran miles away! (Literally seven villages, saat-gao)
Youngest of all is Ibrahim Quli, The one who is the favourite of all"

Then the Poet goes on to describe the battle, the details of which match with the account in the *Mirat-i-Ahmadi*. In the battle of Arras the Poet asserts that Rustam was killed by betrayal of Pilaji Rao

or else he could not have been defeated. Pilaji allied with Rustam first and then changed sides, as defeating Rustam was important to him.

... partam pilujiye dago deedu chhe,
looti lashkar ne kop keedho chhe,
beejo to kanthak koli mehwasi,
deedho ratyabo, keedho bahu hashi....
Tyare Rustam khan maara gaya chhe.

"... First Pilaji betrayed him, angered him by looting his provisions,
then the mehwasis betrayed him by harassing his army......
It is only after all that, that Rustam could be defeated!"

After Rustam's death the Marathas looted the places around Ahmadabad as per the agreement with Hamid Khan.

tyathi Hamidshah Gujarate avya sarve Maratha sanghate lavya,
bhadarma aavi keedho mukam...
vachan apyu te palo tame sava dahado seher lootyu ame,
hamedshah emaj kahave seher lootyani namoshi ave,
hamedshah to sheherma raha, looti lagadi maretha gaya,
navya verano navyopar bar bar rupiya lidha be vaar.

"... From there (bank of Mahi River) Hamid Khan came to
Gujarat (Ahmadabad)Bringing all the Marathas with him,
He settled down in Bhadra...,

'Fulfill the promise you made' (the Marathas said), 'we will loot the city',

[But] Hamid Khan was ashamed (scared for his reputation) to loot the city,

[Therefore he] remained in the city and the Marathas left after plundering it.

[They] started the new trend of levying vera (cesses) and took twice the amount [they were promised]"

The *Pavado* ends with the praise of Rustam Ali Khan's bravery,

"... The way a Tiger roars
Rustam's army goes into the battlefield,
Seeing him the enemy runs away!
The way birds fly by the approach of men,
The Marathas also run away seeing the advent of Rustam's army"

And his administration,

Surano haq, lokno Tham
Rustame tyaha jayi keedho vishram
Aavine dushman pavle lage
Rustamna sarkhu surapan bhage.
Enha sarikhi himatya rahejo

Taruare jas enho toh dejyo,
Dhanya eni janani-keri kukh (kok)
Surajanne pragatavyu sukh.

" Rustam would sit in peace only when his people live in peace,
Once he catches his enemy even they start to sing his praise!
Praise be to the mother, who gave birth to him,
the one who has given peace to people."

The importance of the last verse could be understood through the measures Rustam had taken to control the local miscreants. The *Mirat* mentions an incident where Syed Ali Waiz, a preacher, was creating social discord in Surat. Rustam imprisoned him and sent him to Baroda.[426] This created uproar as the Waiz had Arab and Rumi *sibandi*s as retainers but Rustam silenced everybody through his strong rule and established peace in the town. While Rustam was proceeding to Ahmadabad to fight Hamid Khan some people influenced him to release Syed Ali who returned to Surat. In 1726 after Rustam's death Syed Ali played an important role in instigating a riot in Surat.[427]

The resistance to the payment of *jama'* is in evidence since the last years of the 17th Century. This has also been reckoned as one of the evidence of Mughal decline. In case of Gujarat, this tendency was

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426 *Mirat*, op.cit., Pp. 414-415.
427 *Mirat-ul-haqaiq*, op.cit., f. 460 (a)

sporadic in the 17^{th} Century and during the 18^{th} Century it became widespread with most of the region becoming *zortalbi.* Amongst the areas that were becoming *zortalb*, Cambay was perhaps one of the first. A piece of folk literature, the text of which unfortunately could not be located but it finds a mention in the *Gujarati Sahitya Kosh* indicates this tendency. *Bhan no Shalakho* was composed in 1707 in Khaksar *pargana* of *sarkar* Khambayat (Cambay). It eulogizes a fight between the ryots near Padra village and the Mughal Subahdar over the non-payment of the *Jama'* as early as 1707. The people of Khaksar *pargana* gave seven *bigha*s of land in *pasaitu* (revenue free village grant) to Gangadas Bhavani for composing this poem.[428]

Peshwa's rule has left a negative mark on the minds of the people of Gujarat. The widespread use of *ijara* and its institutionalization under the Maratha rule led to the oppression of the local population. Another oppressive institution that came in existence was the *kamavisdari* system in which the functions of revenue collection, maintenance of law and order and the judicial duties were combined in one person, the *kamavisdar.* The *kamavisdar*s also introduced the system of collection of fines instead of handing down punishment to criminals. The *kamavisdar*s were in dire need resources and hence they used every opportunity to collect money. This wrecked havoc in the social system. The rich could always get away after committing crimes while the poor could not pay the exorbitant fines. Certain *Sarsubah*s, who held the office on *ijara*, employed spies

[428] Jayant Kothari, Jayant Gadith, Chandrakant Sheth (eds), *Gujarati Sahitya Kosh*, Part. I-Medieval, Ahmedabad, 1989,p. 94.

in the cities and nailed down people for committing crimes so that they could impose fines on them. In most cases people were falsely implicated in order to extract money from them. The *Sati Saduba no Pavado*, composed in 1816 at Ahmedabad is devoted exclusively to one such incident.[429] It runs like this:

Naropant Abba, the *Sarsubah* of Gujarat had employed *chhadias*[430] or agents who reported on the wealth and the private information of people around the Ahmedabad city. Based upon their information the Sarsubah asked such people as were accused of various crimes to pay up to retain their honour and freedom. On refusal they were harshly treated like keeping heavy stones on such persons or confining them in dark rooms. The amount so obtained was shared between the *chhadia* and the *sarsubah*. It so happened that one day Saduba, the wife of a *bhat* in the city, was accused of adultery and was being carried away by the *Sarsubah*'s men. Saduba in retaliation pleaded her husband to kill her to protect her honour i.e., perform *traga*. The *bhat* accordingly committed *traga* on his infant son and wife. This created a tumult. All the *bhat*s in the city assembled before the *Sarsubah*'s Haveli and the house of the *chhadia*. Four of the Shroffs also joined them in seeking an explanation. All the merchants and such groups as the Brahmanas, Gosains, Fakirs, etc also assembled before the *sarsubah*'s place and closed down the shops. The intervention of the Gaekwad and the English produced no pacifying effect on them.[431] They demanded that the *chhadia* named

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429 Though the text of this *pavado* could not be located, it's contents have been summarized in detail by Commissariate Vol. III, op.cit., Pp. 884-889.

430 *Chhadia* literally meant a person who reports or one who indulges in gossips, Ibid.

431 A.K.Forbes, *Rasmala II, op.cit.*, Pp. 429-430; R.B.Jote, op.cit., Pp. 154-155. The incident also

Uttam be handed over to them. At length the *chhadia* was handed over to the mob that beat him to death. Later, a shrine was constructed and dedicated to the memory of Saduba and she was given the status of a *sati*.[432]

Another *garba*, relating to the times of Aba Shelukar, the *sarsubah* of Ahmedabad is available in parts. Aba Shelukar was the Sarsubah of Gujarat around 1800 and was a partisan of Nana Fadnavis. It is said that he took Ijara of the place for ten lakhs of Rupees. To collect this exorbitant amount he blatantly harassed the people of Ahmadabad. This *garba* called *Shelukar no Garbo* describes his atrocities in detail.[433] It starts with:

Punethi shelukar aaviyore
Karva amdavadna rajre,
Shelukar sheed avyo' to ser mare.

"Shelukar has come from Poona
To rule over Ahmadabad
Why has he come and what for?"

Then the *garba* describes the details of his reception and his lifestyle.

Raypur darwaje pesiya re bhare chadhavi asvari,

finds mention in *GOB IX*, Pp. 127-128.

432 A.K.Forbes, P. 482.

433 The Gujarati version of the text is given in the footnote, R.B.Jote, op.cit., Pp: 150-151.

Pesta te hatya kareere, kapyo rastano piliyo.

"He entered from the Raipur gate with an impressive [number of] followers!
Immediately he committed a murder, cut down all the pipal[434] trees on the road!"

It further says:

Aavyo tare doshala odhi, gayo tare chadro odi,
Shelukar te jas na lidhore,
... gayo tare taliyo bahu padiyo!!

"[He] entered openly wearing a shawl (doshala) and left wrapped in a sheet (chadar)!
He did not earn any goodwill!
..... When he left people clapped a lot (expressing happiness)!"

The above verse shows that Aba Shelukar was unpopular with the people of Ahmedabad. Aba Shelukar was defeated and imprisoned by Govind Rao Gaekwad in 1800. He was a supporter of Nana Fadnavis and opposed BajiRao II's accession to the office of Peshwa in 1797. Subsequently, when Nana Fadnavis died in 1800 Shelukar rebelled against the Peshwa. Baji Rao II commissioned Govind Rao Gaekwad to quell the rebellion and arrest Shelukar. Subsequently, the

434 Pipal trees are considered to be sacred in Gujarat as in the rest of India as they provide shadow and refuge from heat, to the travelers. The composer here calls cutting down these trees a murder.

Gaekwads were given the *ijara* of Ahmedabad and this ended the chapter of Shelukar's rule in Gujarat.

The Peshwa's *sarsubahs* in general were exploitative. *Ahmedabad no Itihas*, written during the 19th century recounts that the wealthy people were scared to display their wealth or wear good clothes in public, as that would have attracted the attention of *Sarsubah*'s men. It also mentions that the robberies committed in the city used to go unnoticed, as the *sarsubah* was believed to take a *chauth* in the stolen property. Even though no documentary proof supports this statement, but the level of lack of confidence in the integrity of the *sarsubah* is clearly evident.[435]

It may be mentioned that there were a few exception to this general rule of conduct by the Maratha *Sarsubas*. For example, Raghunath Mahipat, popularly known as *Kaka Saheb* who was the uncle of was Vithalrao Babaji, the Gaekwad Sarsubah of Katiawad, was extolled for his kindness and welfare measures. In Mahipat's time, there was an increase in the *jama* and was also credited with repairing the Kankaria tank and make it serviceable. He ruled for ten years from 1800-1810. He was known to be soft spoken and good to the ryots.[436]

During the famine of 1813, called *Agnotaro Kal,* another *sarsubah*, Ramchandra Kishan took appropriate measures to

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435 Maganlal Wakhatchand, Amdavad no Itihas, Ahmedabad, 1851, Pp. 105-106.
436 Ibid. P.46.

ameliorate the sufferings of the common people. During this famine the price of grain rose exorbitantly. The *Sarsubah* created a stock of grain at a centralized place and also posted *chaukis* over the shops to ensure that grain is not taken away for hoarding. He then organized a grain distribution system so that every family got the requisite amount of grain.[437].

The harassment of the population and exaction of undue taxes was not confined to the Marathas alone. In the first half of the eighteenth century the Nazims also behaved similarly. *Mirat-i-Ahmadi* has many references to high handedness of the Naib-Nazims in collecting illegal taxes, the most common being *Bewarah*. The Naib-Nazims also collected fines instead of punishing the criminals and made exactions without any scruples and falsely imprisoned people.[438] The Nazims targeted certain communities of traders and extracted money from them on various counts, including putting fine on the entire community for a crime committed by one of its members.[439]

Besides the Marathas, the local communities like the Girasias, Kolis and Kathis also contributed towards the disorder. The Kolis had always been turbulent and created disturbances in the Mughal heydays as well. Since the last years of the 17th Century they increased their plunder and pillaging activities. The Kathis who lived in central Saurashtra bordering the sarkar of Ahmedabad, similarly harassed the areas between Juangadh and Ahmadabad. Their main base was *Than*

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437 Ibid. Pp. 47-48.
438 *Mirat*, Pp. 398, 459, & 487-489.
439 Ibid. Passim.

which was destroyed by Shuja'at Khan I in 1690. During the 18th Century the Kathis became even more recalcitrant. Fatehsing Rao Gaekwad commissioned the Nawab of Cambay to deal with the Kathis as Cambay's territories bordered those of the Kathis. The Nawab received a grant, called *kathipal* consisting of seven villages and forty thousand rupees annually from the Gaekwads for the same. Khambayat bore the brunt of the Kathi depredations the most being contiguous to the Kathi territory. They established *giras* claims over certain villages of Cambay.[440] By the end of the Century, however, their power declined considerably and they were obliged to apply for protection from first the Nawab of Junagadh. Later they sought the help of the British against the aggressions of the Bhavnagar chieftain, as already mentioned.

VERAS

Vera in Gujarati was used in the sense of cess or an additional tax. These cesses came to be levied since the beginning of the Century due to the slackening of Mughal authority and got included in the *jama'*. The *Mirat* refers to the extra taxes that were levied on the residents of towns as *bewarah*. Though we have not been able to understand the difference, if any, between the two, the concept of *vera* and *bewarah* appears to be the same. The tax realized from on houses from individuals is called *bewarah* in the *Mirat*; in later sources the

[440] *Bom.Pres.Gaz- Cambay*, op.cit., P. 220.

same is referred to as *vera*.[441] The levying of various cesses shows the attitude of the rulers to extract as much money from various sections of the people as they can and *bewarah* was one such additional demand to meet that end. *Bewarah* came to be levied for the first time after the death of Shuja'at Khan by Hamid Khan, the uncle of Nizam-ul- Mulk.[442] This subsequently became a major source of revenue for the Nazims especially when the city was under siege. This cess was levied on various pretexts. For instance, when Mubariz-ul-Mulk became Nazim he arrested important traders of the Bohra community and tortured them, even killing one of them. He extracted fines up to Rs. 3 lakhs from the traders of this community and imposed *bewarah* of various counts repeatedly on the community.[443] During the Maratha rule many other kinds of *bewarah* came to be levied, like the *bewarah-i-janoi* that was collected at the time of the Hindu thread ceremony; a *vera* was levied on the Kanbis (peasant caste) at the time of widow marriages; the Kanbi community allowed widow remarriage termed *dhariwa*. The *vera* on *dhariwa* was realized at the rate of one rupee four rupees per marriage. People attending such marriages also were required to pay four annas person as *nazrana* to the *Sarsubah*, the *darogah* of *Katra Parcha* and the *faujdar-i-gard*. People coming from outside the city to attend the marriage had to pay ten annas for the coconut.[444]

441 *Mirat* for Bewarah and *Bom. Prez. Gaz-provincial series-Gujarat* for different kinds of vera, passim.
442 *Mirat*, P.426.
443 Ibid. P.459.
444 Ibid. P.899. It seems that there is printing mistake in the English translation of the *Mirat* as it states that four annas was levied on such marriages whereas people attending such marriages were required to pay four rupees. The reverse seems more probable.

In the rural areas on the other hand, it was the *girasias* who extracted ransom money from their neighbouring villages in the name of *toda-giras*. *Toda-giras* literally means a payment collected at the entrance of a village. It was, however, protection money paid to safeguard a village from plunder by the *girasias*. This *vera* was known in different areas of Gujarat by different names: *vol*, *pol*, *rakhopa*, etc.[445] Rajas of Rajpipla and Mandvi, were the biggest amongst the *girasias*. The *toda-giras* of the Mandvi Raja amounted to Rs. 80,000 from 403 villages annually.[446] This levy was, at times, received in kind in the form of goats, animal hides, etc and it was rarely received in the form of land grants.[447]

Every section of society had to pay *vera* of one or the other type. Thus, *karam vero* was realized on both the agriculturists and non-agriculturists;[448] *pani pidha no vero*, literally a cess on drinking water was levied on those who paid no other tax and it appears to be a tax for allowing people to live in a village; *mansa*, (cess on oil or butter); *sal-vero* (loom tax on weavers); *bambh-vero* (cess on leather dressers); *hal-vero* (plough cess); *dharala-vero* (cess on carrying arms); *kasab- vero* (cess on artisans); *betheli-vero* (cess levied on idlers), and *hadia-vero* (cess levied to support the family of a person who died defending his village by making land grants for its subsistence). Other cesses include *gulal* (realized at Holi time) and a cess realized at the time of Dussehra. It is amply clear from the list of

445 *State Gazetteer of Baroda* – II, Pp. 102-103.
446 Ibid.
447 Ibid.
448 Ibid.

taxes cited above that the rulers were trying to augment their resources over and above the established forms of taxation.

LOCAL LEADERSHIP

In a situation of political uncertainty as it existed in the 18th century Gujarat, the role of community leaders became very important. Thus, the Nagarsheths and Mahajans whose social influence was on the increase from the 17th century, came to develop a clout of their own. Their increased importance during the period has been recognised by scholars.[449] The influence that they exercised over the administration can be gauged from the instances cited in the contemporary sources. In 1723, on the representation of the Mahajans and the inhabitants of the town, the Mutsaddi and Faujdar of Surat, Momin Khan was removed from the charge of *kotwal* (*chabutra kotwali*). Certain other officials like the *naib-thanedar* of Chaurasi *pargana* in Surat was removed on the charges of oppression made by the merchants.[450]

It seems that the Mahajans since the early 18th Century had started playing important role in the administration. Thus, for instance in 1725 the *Mutasaddi* of Surat had entrusted the levying of cess on each *mohalla* to the Mahajan of the jewellers' community as he needed resources for the payment of salaries to the soldiers.[451] Due to

449 M.N.Pearson, *Merchants and Rulers in Gujarat*, Delhi, 1976; Farhat Hasan, op.cit.
450 Mirat-ul-Haqaiq ff. 236(a) & 236(b).
451 Ibid. f.34(b).

the active participation of the merchant class in administration, they sometimes were drawn in factional fights. For example the tussle that took place between Kapur Chand Bhansali, the Nagarsheth of Ahmedabad and Anup Singh Bhandari, the Naib-Nazim, who was notorious for harassing the traders on account of collection of *Bewarah*. Kapur Chand as the Nagarsheth, had employed around 500 *sibandi*s and used them to safeguard the traders from the harassment of Bhandari's men. It was because of this that Anup Singh Bhandari later assassinated Kapur Chand.[452]

The main duty of the Nagarsheth was to protect the interests of the trading community. The members of the trading communities elected a Nagarsheth as their representative in their dealings with the State. However due to the unsettled conditions and the factional fights the post of Nagarsheth ceased to be elective and instead the Nazims appointed men of their choice to this post, serving their own interests. The appointment of Gangadas by Sarbuland Khan and that of Ahmad Bohra by Ajit Singh as Nagarsheths points towards this development.[453] This situation also led to conflicts in some cases.

Throughout the Century, the merchants acting as leaders took the onus of saving the towns from the plunder of the Marathas and other disturbers. They took the lead in negotiations with the Marathas

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452 *Mirat*, P.388.
453 Ibid. Pp. 487-489.

in settling the amount of *khandani* to save the towns from being plundered.

The situation remained the same in 1780 when General Goddard took over Ahmadabad from the Peshwa's *Sarsubah*. The local leaders, apprehending the sacking of the city by the British troops, petitioned before Goddard asking him to desist from such an act. The translation of the document by Gen. Goddard assuring the people of Ahmedabad at the behest of the influential people of the place was as follows:

"Amir-ud-Daulah, General Goddard Bahadur, Fateh Jung, the servant of Shah Alam, bahadur Ghazi, year 1194 H. Be it known to Nathusha Nagaresheth, Sheikh Muhammad Saleh, the Qazi, Mia Mirza Amu, the Badshahi Diwan, and the residents and the people of Ahmadabad, that at present they should dwell in their homes with entire composure of mind; and they should not have the slightest anxiety or fear in their hearts for any reason whatsoever; and they should engage themselves in their usual avocations, because no one shall trouble them or interfere with them in any way. This injunction should be considered peremptory and should be acted upon. Written on the 5th day of the month of Safar in the year 1194 AH., corresponding to the 23rd year of the accession (11febrauary 1780).
-Thomas Goddard."[454]

[454] M.S. Commissariate, Vol.III, op.cit., P. 792.

As can be seen, the local leaders including Nathu Shah, the Nagarsheth, the local Qazi and others, along with the imperial Diwan performed the role of leaders safeguarding the city against possible plunder. A similar incident had taken place earlier when Kushal Chand was the sole Nagarsheth of Ahmadabad and the Marathas came to plunder the city. This was in 1725 following the death of Rustam Ali Khan. Kushal Chand also had dissuaded the Marathas from plundering the city. He seems to have paid money to the Marathas to save the city from plunder. The Mahajans in gratitude promised in writing to give four *annas* for every hundred rupees worth of goods that entered the city, in perpetuity to the Nagarsheth and his descendants.[455] Subsequently, the city was saved from the Maratha plunder, even though the villages could not be saved.

While the rulers and high functionaries of the period in the region were preoccupied with augmentation of their resources, some of them also undertook public welfare works like construction of wells and tanks. Raja Raghunath Das, the *Diwan* of Muiz-ud-Dawlah, is credited with constructing a step-well adjacent to the Panch Kuwa at Ahmedabad. People could obtain sweet potable water from there.[456] Similarly, Vajeram, the *peshkar* of Najm-ud-Dawlah constructed a step-well near Jamalpur gate.[457] During the flood of 1728 in river Tapti, Nawab Behram Khan undertook relief work amongst the distressed population of Surat. He distributed loaves of bread amongst

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[455] Ibid. Vol. II, op.cit., p. 420. The author has reproduced the document in Modi Script.
[456] *Mirat*, P. 408.
[457] *Mirat*, P. 613.

the Muslims and fried grams amongst the Hindus.[458] Similarly, Lallubhai, the *diwan* of Bharuch, distributed grain in all the villages of Bharuch during the drought. He was also credited with construction of public tanks and rest houses for travellers, digging of several wells and a *bawli* (large well) with hewn stone.[459]

The tradition of public welfare activities by the rulers and administrators continued even in the nineteenth century, which has been recorded in the English sources. Thus, in 1803 we find Fateh Mohammad, the regent of Kutch opening fair price shops in Bhuj in times of scarcity following lack of rains. Again in 1813, he offered work on Desalsar Lake to the famine stricken people, wages being paid in grains. Grain shops with proper guards were also opened at Bhuj, Mundra, Mandvi and Anjar.[460] During the many famines of 18th Century the Maharaos of Kutch distributed large quantities of cooked food to the famine stricken people.[461] During the famine of 1813 the chieftains of Palanpur and Radhanpur opened up grain stores. The people were employed on public works and rural watch was increased.[462] The Gaekwad chief also employed people on construction work and thus provided relief.[463]

458 *Mirat*, P. 458.
459 *Oriental Memoirs*, vol. III, op.cit., P. 250 .
460 *Bomb. Pres. Gaz-Cutch*, P. 108.
461 Ibid.
462 *Bom. Pres. Gaz-Palanpur*, P. 315.
463 Walter Hamilton, op.cit., P. 701.

Thus we can say that though the social conditions of the period were not conducive to prosperity, economic or otherwise, the society was able to device mechanisms for survival.

MERCENARY SYSTEM

In this chapter an attempt has been made to analyze the nature and composition of the militia in 18th century Gujarat. The break down of the *mansab* system and the collapse of the Mughal Empire necessitated changes in the nature and character of the army. Thus, in the absence of a system of regular maintenance of contingents as was done by the *mansabdar*s, the role of the mercenaries became important during this period. The mercenary system developed its own peculiarities in the course of time. The individual soldier during this period came to be called as *sibandi*. The *sibandis* were organized into different groups, each headed by a *Jama'dar*. The term *sibandi* for soldiers came to be used extensively during this period in the sources pertaining to Gujarat, as in the rest of India. In the Persian sources the infantry is referred to as *sibandi pyadah* and the cavalry as *sibandi sawar*. Even the British sources occasionally used the word '*sibandi*' for the *sepoy*.

The expansionist activities of the various 18th Century chieftains led to an increase in the demand for soldiers. In order to meet the challenge of the frequent Maratha attacks in Gujarat in the early 18th centuries as also to meet the challenge of the recalcitrant groups like the *girasia*s, *kathi*s and *koli*s, the local chiefs had to maintain suitable military contingents that were composed of the *sibandi*s. The demand for *sibandi*s appears to be on the increase

during this period as the *thanas* also had to be properly garrisoned. These *thanas* were manned by the *sibandis*. These soldiers were also employed the *girasias* for collection of revenue from their villages, especially when their revenue claims were officially accepted. In Dholka for instance, the *girasia* chief of Kounte had in his service a force of two thousand *sibandis* and 150 horsemen, the latter acted as the guards of villages, besides protecting the Raja.[464] We also find a number of Arabs employed as *sibandis* by not only the various chieftains of the region but also by the 'fringe' groups. Jeeva Basawa, a *Bhil* 'marauder' controlling Rajpipla during 1810-15 had in his employment Arab and Sindhi *sibandis*.[465]

FUNCTIONS OF THE SIBANDIS

The *Sibandis* performed many duties during this period. Firstly, they worked as soldiers in the militia of various principalities. As various chiefs were constantly trying to expand their authority at the expense of another, there was always a demand for the *sibandis* to be employed as soldiers by them. They were given employment for short durations and were dismissed after their need was over after paying them their wages.

The second important function performed by the *Sibandis* was to guard the towns. In the prevailing political situation in the 18th

[464] *Walker-Selections XXXIX*, Pp. 12-13.
[465] Walter Hamilton, op.cit., P.713.

century, towns and *qasbas* needed to be protected from depredations. It is due to this that various towns in Gujarat and Saurashtra and Kutch were fortified during this time. The *Sibandis* were given the control of the city-gates and fortifications. Similarly, *sibandis* were employed to man the gates and look after general protection of the towns. It was a very important job and the *sibandis*, who were headed by a *jamadar* were thus men of influence and power. The charge of the city gate was given only to the *jamadars* of trust and confidence. In 1752, after the Maratha occupation of Ahmedabad, Shambhuram, Mohammad Lal Rohilla and Ganga Jat, the confidant of Raghu, the Naib-Subah, (Sarsubahdar) got this charge.[466] How important was it to secure the gates of the city can be gauged from an incident of 1725 regarding Bharuch. Pilaji Rao Gaekwad had conquered Bharuch and left a deputy there to administer it. After a period of nine months the deputy left the town on the receipt of false news regarding the death of Pilaji Rao Gaekwad. He left the defences of the town in the hands of the local Qasbati troops. On discovering that the news of Pilaji's death was a rumour, he returned but could not gain entry into Bharuch town. The Qasbati troops refused to admit the Marathas. They instead handed over the fort to Abdullah Beg, the Mughal Faujdar. The Marathas could never take complete control of the place thereafter.[467]

The *sibandis* at times used their strategic position to bargain for their demands like payment of unpaid salaries by besieging the authorities. In 1761 Sulaiman, an Arab Jamadar imprisoned Nawab Mahabat Khan of Junagadh in the fort of Uparkot. Sulaiman was

466 *Mirat*, P.782.
467 *GOB II*, P.76.

acting on behalf of the brothers of the Nawab, Muzaffär Khan and Fathyab Khan, who were demanding part of the territories for their subsistence. It was then arranged with the Jamadar to give a *jagir* consisting of Ranpur and Dhandhuka, along with 84 villages to them.[468] Many other instances of *sibandis* taking control of Junagadh are mentioned in the *Tarikh-i-Sorath*.[469]

The *sibandis* were also used in the *mulkgiri*, the revenue collection expeditions. Since most of the areas in 18th century Gujarat had become *zortalabi* or *mewasi*, the chieftains had to deploy *sibandis* to collect revenues. The *Sibandis* were also employed by the village to safeguard the residents and their fields against depredations of their neighbours. They were paid from the resources of the village.[470] Similarly, merchants and other men of wealth also employed the sibandis to protect themselves against the harassment of the officials such as the *faujdar*s and the *Nazim*s who tried to fleece such people on the flimsiest of pretext. Kapur Chand Bhansali, the *Nagarsheth* of Ahmedabad around 1719-20[471] and Kushal Chand, *Nagarsheth* during around 1733,[472] according to the *Mirat-i-Ahmadi* employed *sibandis* to protect themselves against the Naib-Nazim's harassment. Similarly, in Surat Mohammad Ali[473] employed thousands of *sibandis* and

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468 *Tarikh-i-Sorath*, P. 145.

469 Ibid. Passim.

470 Mountsuart Elphinstone, *Territories conquered from the Peshwa: A Report*, J.C.Shrivastava (ed), Delhi, 1973, P. 281.

471 *Mirat*, P.398.

472 Ibid., P.516.

473 Ibid. Pp. 457-458.

Ahmed Chelapi maintained around 2000 Arab and Rumi *Sibandis* as bodyguards.[474]

ORGANISATION

A contingent of *sibandi*s was headed by a *jamadar*. The *jamadar*s were of various ethnic groups: Arabs, Rohillas, Sindhis, Sidis etc. However, it was not always necessary that the contingent of a *jamadar* may also be composed of members of the same community. A *jamadar* being the head of the contingent was responsible for many things. [475] He negotiated the salary and the terms and condition of service of the *sibandi*s. Thus he acted as the representative of the *sibandi*s and looked after their interests. The employer dealt with individual *sibandi*s only through him. The *jamadar* also ensured payment of salaries to the *sibandi*s. This is attested to by several instances where the Jamadars stood guarantees to the *Sibandis* ensuring payment of their salary.[476] A *jamadar*'s *sibandi* contingent consisted of 100 to 150 men.

The *jamadar*s were inducted through the agency of the Vakil of the principality who would approach *jamadar* and enroll him by

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474 *Mirat*, P.522.

475 He is called the 'jobber-Commander' by Kolff and Gommans who also trace the origin of the *jamadars* as playing a prominent role in the military labour market to the time of Sher Shah. See *Introduction* in Jos J. L. Gommans and Dirk H .A. Kolff (eds), *Warfare and Weaponry in South Asia*, Oxford, 2001, P. 18.

476 *Tarikh-i-Sorath*, P. 187. The Arab jamadars Zubaidi, Salih Abdullah, Mohammad Mohsin and Hamid Nasir had in various instances stood security to the troops by the Nawab of Junagadh.

paying some amount of money. The *jamadar* would then raise the contingent of the *sibandis* and report for duty. This process is explained by Mr.Lambert, British commercial resident at Cambay in a letter dated Surat, 23rd September, 1757: *Received duplicates of letters from Mr.Lambert at Cambay. The bearer of (the letters) is a Jemmedar Kalee Khan to whom I have given a commission to enlist at Broach and the adjacent villages, where he is acquainted, a company of sepoys, & for this purpose have on proper security advanced him 200 rupees. His agreement is, that on his arrival with you, such of the people as he brings with him whom you like not, may be rejected, & the remainder you may entertain. Their pay is to commence, at the rates mentioned in the enclosed paper from the time you enrol them.*[477]

The *jamadar* was responsible for his *sibandis*. It is clearly brought out by various instances cited in our sources. *Mirat-i-Ahmadi* has narrated an incident of the time of Momin Khan. When the Marathas from Ahmedabad ousted Momin Khan in 1758-59 and the latter set out for Cambay, one of his *jamadars*, Mohammad Lal Rohilla, who was the leader of the Rohilla *sibandis jamadars* at Ahmedabad, put forth claims of Rs. 80,000 before Momin Khan as arrears of salaries of the *sibandis* under his command. He proposed to Momin Khan that if the latter was unable to pay the whole amount, he would reduce the liability to Rs. 40,000 by Momin Khan, out of which he would raise Rs. 20,000 himself by selling his personal belongings while the remaining Rs. 20,000 should be paid by Momin Khan.

477 G.W.Forrest,Vol. I, op.cit., P. 329.

Mohammad Lal Rohilla Rohilla, however, had to leave Cambay on perceiving a threat to his life. The incident indicates the concern and a sense of responsibility that the *jamadars* felt for their *sibandis*.

COMPOSITION

The *Sibandis* in the region were of heterogeneous groups. They could be broadly classified into the local and indigenous, such as *qasbatis, kolis, rabaris, jutts* etc., and those who came from outside (non-indigenous) to seek employment in Gujarat such as Arabs, Marwaris, Sindhis, Baluchis, Rohillas, Sidis, Purabiyas, Mavlas, Gosains etc. By the middle of the Century the latter groups seem to have outnumbered the locals as they were recruited in all the major principalities in Gujarat in greater numbers. A major difference between the two categories of *sibandis* was that the local *sibandis* were tied down to land while the non-indigenous *sibandis* were mobile.

Amongst the non-indigenous *sibandis* the most sought after ethnic group was of that of the Arab who appears to have made their appearance in Gujarat from the first quarter of the 18th century. The first mention of an Arab being employed as a *Sibandis* in our sources is in relation to the contingent of Meher Ali Khan, a *mansabdar*[478]

[478] *Mirat*, P.402. Meher Ali Khan was a resident of Ahmedabad. With the appointment of Maharaja Ajit Singh as the Nazim in 1717 he became unemployed. By this time we can see a trend where the Nazims themselves appointed Faujdars and other officials of their own faction and mansabdars of other factions were left to fend for themselves. Meher Ali

Later, Shuja'at Khan, the Naib Nazim had in his employment seven to eight thousand *sawar* and *pyadah* including such categories as the Qasbatis, Arabs and Dakhanis.[479] Momin Khan I of Cambay had a party of Arab and Rohilla soldiers.[480] During the period when several functionaries of the state were trying to augment their military strength, they invited several reputed Jamadars to join their service. Mohammad Shahbaz Rohilla was one such Jamadar who had come to the region with 300 horsemen and infantry to Gujarat during the Nizamat of Momin Khan I Naj-ud-Daula. He became close to Muftakhir Khan[481] and later to Jawan Mard Khan. Jawan Mard Khan appointed him as the Faujdar of Dholka.[482] Similarly, Mohammad Rashid Beg, a Jamadar discharged by Nadir Shah was invited by Momin Khan II to join him at Cambay.[483] Earlier, two Jamadars, Mir Nathu and Muhammad Salabat, were invited by Asaf Jah to join Hamid Khan in his fight against Shuja'at Khan. They had earlier served Nizam-ul-Mulk while the Nizam was in Malwa.[484] The Marathas too employed these *sibandi* groups. Shripat Rao was said to have a contingent of Arab and Sindhi *sibandis*.[485] Towards the end of the Century some instances of Gosains being employed in Gujarat has come to our notice.[486] There is one instance of Pathans,[487] Afghans

Khan is said to have employed Arab sibandis against the possible harassment by Bhandari, the Naib-Nazim.

479 Ibid. P.417.

480 Ibid. P.601.

481 He later adopted the title Momin Khan II.

482 *Mirat*, P.711.

483 Ibid. P.754.

484 Ibid. P.419.

485 Ibid. P.753.

486 *HSBSR IV*, Lt. 16, P. 479.

487 *GOB IV*, P. 326. The Pathans were 2000 in number and were armed with swords and spears. They also had 50 muskets and only 3 guns.

and Baluch *sibandis*[488] (there is one instance of Sikh *sibandis*)[489] finding employment in Gujarat. Marwadi *sibandi*s were employed in Kutch and Palanpur.[490] The Marwadis are not reported in other areas of Gujarat besides Palanpur and Kutch where they were found employed possibly because these two areas were close to Marwar.

It appears that the non-indigenous *sibandis* were regarded to be more efficient than the local ones. This is evident of from the reply of Ali Mohammad Khan to his father's query as to who will win in the war between Shuja'at Khan and Hamid Khan. Ali Mohammad Khan had replied that Shuja'at Khan had an army consisting of Gujarati *Qasbati*s who would never array themselves in a war nor remain steady in their support and would run away when confronted with the Marathas; Rustam Ali Khan had Arabs and other such *Sibandis* who have several times faced Pilaji Rao in the past and had adopted their mode of warfare.[491] Thus implied in the reply was the acknowledgement of the superiority of non-indigenous *sibandis.* Later, even Alexander Walker, in his observations on Saurashtra reiterates this sentiment. He says: *"Independently, however, of the indigenous soldiery of the country, there are many troops of mercenaries employed among the principal chieftains, who are generally composed of the adventurers from the Sea-coast of Arabia, Makran and Sind. These are the bravest and best armed, and the most*

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488 *Tarikh-i-Sorath*, P.193.

489 *GOB IV*, P. 198. While Baroda's battle with Malhar Rao was proceeding 400 horsemen and 300 foot of the Sikh tribe entered into Babaji's service on the Arab Jamadars' security.

490 James Burnes, *a Narrative of a visit to the Court of Sinde; A Sketch of the History of Cutch,* Edinburgh, 1831, P.183.

491 *Mirat*, P.418.

formidable description of troops- they compose, indeed, the only infantry in the Country, unless Mhers and Meenas may be styled such; and generally comprise the principal part of the standing garrisons in the fortresses."[492]

The indigenous *sibandis*, referred to as *qasbatis*,[493] in employment with various principalities in the region lacked organization and skills. These Qasbatis were to be found in the whole of Gujarat but were most active in Saurashtra. In the mainland, the Qasbatis were employed from early in the century by Mughal *faujdars*. Gradually, however, the non-indigenous *sibandis* replaced them and they were confined only to the interiors of Saurashtra. They were most powerful in Dholka, Dhandhuka *parganas*, where they also acted as *manotidars*. Amongst the Qasbatis of Dholka we find the mention of one Bawa Miah who extended support to the Gaekwad army in 1800 with 200 followers to oust Aba Shelukar from Ahmadabad. He later helped the British army against Malhar Rao of Kadi in 1803.[494]

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492 *Walker-Selections XXXIX*, P. 292.

493 There is some ambiguity as to the actual meaning of the term Qasbati. The 19th century British sources translate the term *Qasbatis* as the 'Muslim residents of the towns'. This would lead one to conclude that the nature of the indigenous soldiery during this period was not rural as suggested by Dirk Kolff but was urban. However, here we need to ponder over the meaning of the term *Qasba* itself. A *qasba* was wholesale market in a *pargana*. Surplus produce from the villages were brought here for sale and retailers from cities would also come here to buy it. Thus *qasbas* developed as important centres in the surplus distribution network. But a *qasba* was essentially rural. Thus, it is possible that the *qasbatis* soldiers were also peasants. This also explains why they were not mobile vis-a-vis the non-indigenous *sibandis*. The qasbatis who also worked as *manotidars* indicates that they were peasants with resources and therefore invested in *manotidari* or standing surety for revenue payments from the ryots. This also suggests that the Qasbatis were peasants with greater resources.

494 A.K.Forbes, op.cit., P.66.

In Saurashtra the Qasbatis are also referred to as *Patanis*' though we do not know the reason for naming them so. Ranchodji Amarji, the author of *Tarikh-i-Sorath*, says that the Qasbatis of the region of Somnath-Patan were converted to Islam in some foregone times and since then they were called Patanis.[495] In the 18th century, these Patanis seem to have spread within Saurashtra finding work as *Sibandis* in the various chieftaincies. Thus, they were to be found at Junagadh, Nawanagar, Bhavnagar, etc. The specific names of the Patani and Qasbati Jamadars mentioned in several instances do not always indicate their religious affiliations. Names like Attaji, Hansoji, Chand Chavda, etc only indicates their local origins. Perhaps these were one of the many groups that were only partially assimilated into Islam during the medieval times which was so common in Gujarat.

Another term that is used in the context of the Qasbatis is Purabiya. Early in the Century sporadic mention of the Purbiyas as a martial group is made in our sources. *Mirat* also mentions Purbiyas along with the Arabs and the Rohillas in generalized terms. Around 1725 Shuja'at Khan and Ibrahim Quli Khan both are mentioned as having a squadron of Purbiya *Sibandis*. However in the course of the Century the use of Purbiya as a distinct martial group in the sources is replaced by its use in an ambiguous way. This is especially true of Saurashtra. One Fakirchand Purbiya garrisoning the fort of Devra in Nawanagar is referred as Qasbati.[496] Basant Rai Purbiya is again referred to as a Qasbati of Junagadh.[497] It is possible that the Jamadars

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[495] *Tarikh-i-Sorath*, P. 66.
[496] Ibid. P.171.
[497] *Walker-Selections* XXXIX, P.180.

above referred to were basically Purbiyas having a Qasbati following. Anyway by the mid Century the Purbiyas as a distinct martial group is no more referred to in our sources.

Besides the above-mentioned groups the local groups armed with local weapons like swords and sabres. They were potential soldiers who were employed by the local polities on a smaller scale. They otherwise lived on plunder. Amongst them were *Mhers* and *Rabaris* of Porbandar. The Mher soldiers were given the charge of the defence of villages in Porbandar along with the Rabaris.[498] They could muster three to four thousand men in times of need.[499] Their area of operation was however confined to Porbandar only. The *Patanwadia Kolis* of north Gujarat also worked as *sibandi*s but otherwise frequently took to freebooting. The early British officers found them to be 'untameable plunderers', mostly active in the Rann of Kutch and on the banks of Mahi river.[500] The *Jhuts* from the town of Warye in north Gujarat also worked as sibandis and could muster from 800 to 1000 horsemen well mounted and with sabres and spears.[501] There area of operation was around the Dassada and Adriana stretch in North Gujarat. They usually had to confront the *Malliks* of Dassada who had established a degree of sovereign authority in this locality. Similarly, the *Meenas* and *Sodhas* in Kutch were used as *sibandi*s in case of need.[502] Otherwise they survived on plundering the areas of

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498 *Walker-Selections* XXXIX, P.168.
499 Walter Hamilton, op.cit.,P. 666.
500 *Bom. Pres. Gaz. Population-Hindus*, Pp. 241-242.
501 James MacMurdo, 'Journal of a route through the peninsula of Guzerat in the year 1809-1810', published as Suresh Chandra Ghosh (ed), *The Peninsula of Gujarat in the early 19th century*, New Delhi, P. 94.
502 James Burness, op.cit., Pp. 135-136.

Wagad in Kutch and around Radhanpur on the mainland. The Kolis also fall in this category. They were employed frequently by all the chieftains of Gujarat to increase the numbers in an army. The kolis were generally not paid in cash but were allowed to plunder in lieu of remuneration.[503]

It is important here to take notice of a trend in the composition of the different categories of *sibandi* groups. The categorization was done on the basis of the ethnicity of a group like Arab, Sindhi, Qabati, etc. However within the group there does not seem to be a water-tight regulation regarding the *sibandis* enrolled. For instance, amongst the Arab *sibandis* discharged at Baroda in 1802, one-third of the *sibandis* were Hindustanis.[504] Amongst the Arabs at Baroda the *Sibandi* composition did not always consist only of the Arabs from Arabia. It also included such Arabs who were said to have been migrated to India in some remote time and mingled with the local population here. The Jamadar in the control of the Lehripura gate in Baroda was one such Arab.[505] We also find a greater differentiation being made within these categories in our sources as the century proceeded. Earlier in the Century the Arabs were referred to only as Arabs, while by the end of the Century the distinction between Masqati, Yemeni, etc is made. Similarly amongst the Sindhis, the Makranis are especially mentioned as a distinct category.

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503 *Mirat*. Passim.
504 GOB V, P.230.
505 Ibid. Pp.170-171.

WEAPONS, ETC:

Our sources in this regard only give sporadic information, but some idea of the forms of weapons and artillery and the accessibility of the local Polities to advanced forms of artillery can be had from the information that we come across in the sources. During the Mughal times manufacture of guns was prohibited in the Subahs. The Mughal government had monopolized the manufacture of muskets and perceivably its use as well. Since the beginning of the Maratha rule, however, permission for making guns was openly granted on a charge of half a rupee as tax. Twenty such shops were opened in the city of Ahmedabad with kolis taking to musket manufacture.[506] During Fatehsing Rao Gaekwad's rule one Mahadji Ravandal was manufacturing arrows, muskets, etc for him.[507] It seems that arrows, swords and spears were the common form of and extensively used weapons and muskets were costly.

The indigenous weaponry however did not fulfill the demands of the local chieftaincies. The European artillery and war material was considered to be superior. The local chiefs often asked for such material from the Europeans especially the English. This demand for European artillery also gave the Europeans a hold over the local principalities to some extent. Thus, in 1740 Tegh Bakht Khan of Surat requested the English chief of Surat for 2 barrels of gunpowder and 15

506 *Mirat*, P.750.
507 *HSBSR II*, Lt. 63, P. 198.

mounds of lead. He was apprehending Maratha attack on Surat.[508] At the same time he also asked the English Chief to not send any warlike material to the Ports under *Ganim* control as that could prove dangerous to him. The English consented to this request.[509] The Nawab of Cambay made similar requests for artillery and gunpowder to the British at times.[510]

The Gaekwads too turned to the English company in case of need for war material. Fatehsing Rao, while fighting his uncle Khande Rao his uncle, had asked for 10 guns and 2000 iron shots and good powder. In addition he also asked the Surat Chief to employ 200 young and brave Europeans, as soldiers. He left the matters of pay and other terms to the discretion of English Chief of Surat.[511] During the struggle for power between Fatehsing Rao and Govind Rao Gaekwad both brothers made repeated overtures to the English to supply them artillery and men.[512] In 1791 Manaji Rao Gaekwad asked his *chauthia* of Surat Jayaram Kashi to purchase 100 English guns at that port for the use of *sibandi*s under one Shaikh Ismail Jamadar.[513] Three months later He again requested 1oo maunds of English gunpowder and lead worth Rs. 4000 through the same channel.[514] Thus, although the information in this regard is not enough to reach a conclusion but it can be proposed that the European artillery and war material was

508 *GOB I*, P.41.
509 Ibid.
510 *GOB II*, P. 151.
511 *GOB III*, P.161.
512 *GOB II*, P. 179 for FatehsingRao's request and Ibid. P.180 for GovindRao's request.
513 *HSBSR II*, Lt.5, P: 290.
514 Ibid. Lt.31, P: 318.

considered to be superior and was in demand amongst the local polities including the Marathas.

According to an observation made by Alexander Walker the chieftains of Saurashtra were not interested in the advanced types of war materials. He mentions that the general objective of these chiefs was to safeguard the towns and cities against the local predators than to combat troops provided with artillery. The forts of Junagadh, Bhavnagar, Nawanagar, Morbi, etc contained a large amount of artillery but were unfamiliar with its use.[515]

Possession of weapons seems to be one of the criteria for employment of the *Sibandis*. This is attested by a statement made by Major James Forbes, an English officer in charge of Dabhoi. He quotes a letter from an English officer in the employment of an Indian ruler: *"I was yesterday not a little surpised to be solicited by several Bengal sepoys to give them employ. Upon enquiry I found out to my utter astonishment, they were all deserters, lately arrived from Bengal, with their arms and accoutrements complete. Upwards of fifty are already come & they expect more to join them shortly... At this rate the Marathas will have very little occasion to purchase European firelocks from any other nation, when they are so well supplied by your own people; In this respect they may bid you defiance in case of any future rupture; for to my certain knowledge they have now upwards of 70,000 of English arms in different depots belonging to the sarkar..."*.[516] Alexander Walker also found the quality and type

[515] *Walker-Selections* XXXIX, P. 292.
[516] *Oriental Memoirs III*, Pp. 438-439.

of weapons to be a deciding factor in fixing the salaries of the *sibandis*.[517] The arms, accoutrements and clothing of the *Sibandis* were their personal property.[518]

PAYMENT AND TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT

Information on this aspect is again not directly available in our sources but they give us some idea of the nature of remuneration and the conditions of employment that were current in 18th century Gujarat. It must be mentioned that because of the mercenary nature of military there were no set regulations. Indeed its organization was open ended. The terms of employment were arbitrary, the immediate need of the *Sibandi* groups and the paying capacity of the employer being the main considerations. The function assigned to the Sibandis was also a deciding factor. For instance in case of *mulkgiri* expeditions the *sibandis* were paid more as it was a temporary service. In addition there were prospects of plunder, the plundered articles belonging to the soldiers. On the other hand the *Sibandi*s guarding the city-gates were paid less but their prospect of employment was relatively more steady. Let us consider some statistics that is available with us. In the Gaekwad army a *bargir*, a horseless soldier, was paid from Rs. 6 to Rs. 8 per month.[519] In 1782 Hamid Jamadar was paid Ra.24,000 for guarding the gates of Ahmedabad for four

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517 *GOB VI*, P. 186.
518 *Fall of the Mughal Em*pire II, P. 208.
519 *Baroda State Gazetteer* I, Pp. 635-636.

months.[520] The number of *Sibandis* employed under the Jamadar and other information is not mentioned in our sources. The gunners entertained by the Peshwa in 1764 were paid salaries ranging from Rs. 13 to Rs. 85 per month.[521] Clearly there is a lot of difference in the salaries from one gunner to another in this instance. According to another document dealing with the Peshwa a detachment of Cavalry under Ramoji Bhosle was paid as follows for the year 1742-43: There were 90 Bargirs including 44 musketteers and spearsmen who were paid @ Rs.413 combined for a month and a half. This comes to Rs. 4 ½ per soldier. In addition there were 610 Sawars and their combined monthly salary came to Rs. 4800 i.e, around Rs.8 per sawar per month.[522] During 1774-75 when the English laid siege to Salsette the Peshwa asked his *sardar*s to recruit around 1000 men @ Rs. 8 each for a soldier and Rs. 15 to 20 for a Jamadar. A similar order was given to the *Sarsubah* of Ahmedabad Appaji Ganesh. He further made known his preference for the Arab *Sibandis* as they were considered to be good soldiers.[523] Thus on the basis of the meager information it seems that the salary of a single *Sibandi* sawar generally amounted to around Rs. 6 to 8 and that of a horseless sawar or an infantryman was ranged from 4 to 6 rupees. The statement of Alexander Walker also supports our calculation. He states that the pay of the *Sibandis* is regulated by the caste of the people (by caste he probably means the ethnic category), the quality of their arms and also the reputation of their chief, the Jamadar. The pay of each *sibandi* is between Rs.6 to

520 *HSBSR II*, Lt. 132, P. 249.
521 G.S.Sardesai, *Peshwa Daftar*- 45, op.cit., P.205.
522 Ibid III, P. 266.
523 G.C.Vad & K.B.Marathe, *Peshwa Daftar, Sawai Madhav Rao Peshwa*, Vol. VI, Pt.II, Pp. 3-4.

Rs. 10 and that of the Jamadar from 100 to 150.[524] In many cases the *sibandis* employed locally were not paid salaries as such but were allowed to plunder the areas invaded. This was true mostly for the Kolis and later pindaris. Some times when a ruler could not pay his *sibandis* due to paucity of resources he would take his *sibandis* on plundering expeditions in the countryside to satisfy their demands of arrears of pay.

It must be borne in mind that the salaries paid in cash were over and above the food and other basic emoluments that were customary to be provided to the *sibandis*. This is attested from a statement made by Charl. Gray, major Command of 75th Regiment of the British troops, while camping near Baroda on sept, 10th 1802. He says:

"... The representation without fully explaining to your Hon'able Board, the difference of the pay of the natives in Baroda, and the pay of our troops, and followers, will appear no doubt glaring; but it is to be considered, that under all native governments, the fluctuation in the prizes of Bazaar articles, makes no difference to them, as they invariably receive their pay (atleast a greater part) in grain and cloths."

In case of Baroda[525] the *sibandis* were employed for two years at a time. Upon appointment a *sibandi* was given 1/3rd of his total two

[524] *GOB VI*, P. 186.

[525] The Sibandis at Baroda had to forego a large chunk of their salaries as deductions under various heads. Malpatti was deducted for the maintenance of the wrestlers, Dharmadaya patti for the maintenance of the Brahmanas, Aher Patti charged when the darbar was held on auspicious occasion, Chandela patti was given when the heir was formally acknowledged, Nazrana amounting to an year's salary, was given when the son of a sibandi succeeded to his post. For deductions were made as allowance for high officers like Khasgiwale, Majmudar, Fadnis, Bakshi, Jasuds, etc. *Baroda State Gazetteer*, Pp. 636-637.

years pay, which was called *Rozi.* The remaining 2/3rd was given upon the expiration of the said two years. At this time the *sibandis* had the option of either taking their discharge or continuing in the same way.[526] It seems that employment for at least four months was a custom adhered to by these polities. It ensured some stability to the *Sibandis.*

Another piece of information lets us glean into the terms of Employment. In a letter from GopikaBai of Sankheda to Fatehsing Rao Gaekwad dated 1780, she asks Fatehsing Rao to talk to the Jamadars in her employment making it clear to them that the weapons lost or broken are never made good but only the loss of Horses are replaced. [527] Whether Fatehsing Rao interfered or not is not known but in 1791 Sayaji Rao Gaekwad ordered his men to compensate one Jamadar Gulhala for the loss of men and Horses which was according to the practice. He further ordered to pay up for the loss of weapons as well.[528] Thus one can say that the terms were rather arbitrarily decided and were subject to change according to situation rather than following a set of regulations as such.

In this atmosphere the salaries of the *Sibandis* were often not paid to them. Sometimes the pretext of non-payment was the failure of their expedition. Many recorded instances point towards this trend. Most 18th century principalities faced the problem of not being able to pay the outstanding salaries to the *Sibandi*s. The acute paucity of resources seems to be the basic reason for this. In 1756-57 the salaries

526 *GOB V,* Pp. 174-175
527 *HSBSR II,* Lt. 116, P.235.
528 *HSBSR III,* Lt. 9, P.293.

of the *Sibandis* employed by Bhagwant Rao to conquer Cambay were in arrears. BhagwantRao failed to conquer Cambay and in the subsequent negotiations it was decided that the *Sibandis* should be given bills on Momin Khan II in settlement of their claims. However this amount could not be recovered despite the endeavours of Sadashiv Damodar, the *Sarsubah* of Ahmedabad and his *peshkar*, Tukoji.[529] The Nawabs of Junagadh, Bahadur Khan, Mahabat Khan and Hamid Khan were repeatedly besieged and confined within the *darbar* on their failure to pay the *Sibandis*. Mahabat Khan once invited the Sindhis and Khants in ousting the Arab *Sibandis* who had turned violent demanding their salaries.[530] They had to be pacified once the Arab *sibandi*s took to plundering. Lack of resources with these rulers was a constant problem and Nawabs of Junagadh several times took loans from their Diwan, members of the Amarji family, to pay the *Sibandis*. The Naib-Nazim also faced the same problem.

The British officers frequently accuse the Arab sibandis of changing sides on the non-payment of salaries. For instance in 1774 when Fatehsing Rao Gaekwad was defeated by Govind Rao Gaekwad at Shuklatirth near Bharuch he fled with only a small party of soldiers. The remaining *sibandis* consisting mainly of Arab and Sindh *sibandi*s negotiated terms for themselves and took to Govind Rao's service.[531] Later they were similarly entertained by Raghoba when Govind Rao could not pay their arrears. They however remained inactive in the decisive battle between Raghoba and the Poona forces which Raghoba

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529 *Mirat*, P.778.
530 *Tarikh-i-Sorath*, op.cit, P. 187.
531 *GOB III*, P. 182.

took to mean treachery on their part. This was again on account of arrears of salaries.[532] They were then engaged by Poona. Similarly the Gaekwad troops consisting of Sindhis refused to move into a battle while the second Anglo-Maratha war was being fought. For this Alexander Walker contemptibly states that the only object of these troops is to sell their services at the highest price.[533] There are various such instances of 'treacheous conduct' on part of the *sibandis*. The priority of the troops undoubtedly was their pay. Infact this is borne by a conversation through letters between Mohammad Abud, one of the principal Jamadars of Baroda and Alexander Walker. Through an agreement made by the Arab sibandis with the English Abud had agreed to leave Gujarat and not join any enemy of the Gaekwads after the English takeover of Baroda. He defied this agreement and attempted to join Kanhoji Rao Gaekwad who had rebelled against Anand Rao, the Gaekwad chieftain. When asked to fulfill the terms of the agreement Abud replied: *"...as I am a sepoy, should any one give me a seer of Bajri, with him will I proceed; and if you have any employment for me, I am ready to serve you... "*.[534] This however does not rule out loyalty. Over and above the payment of their salaries the *Sibandis* always served their masters loyally. In case of Ranchodji Amarji the Arabs always sided with him in factional fights at Junagadh because he always paid their salaries promptly. The uncertainty of being paid by the chiefs concerned was the reason for the clamour for pay amongst the *Sibandis*. It should also be borne in mind that the *Sibandis* especially the Arabs and Sindhis used to

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532 Ibid. P. 242.
533 *GOB VI*, P.235.
534 *GOB V*, Pp.102-103.

migrate to Gujarat in the hope of procuring employment and making money, therefore payment in this case became important for them. After certain years of service they used to go back to their country.

NON-INDIGENOUS *SIBANDIS* AND BRITISH CONFRONTATION

Amongst all the groups of *Sibandis* the Arab *sibandis* were particularly sought after by the rulers of 18th Century Gujarat. Their efficiency and valour comes to the fore in an incident of struggle for the region between Hamid Khan and Shuja'at Khan. While Pilaji was in alliance with Hamid Khan he looted the belongings of Rustam Ali Khan. Only the supplies kept under the guard of the Arab squadron was safe.[535] By the mid century their demand over the other groups had risen considerably. The Marathas, local chieftains and English all sought to enlist Arab *Sibandis*. At Bharuch the regular army consisted of permanent and temporary sibandis divided into small units known as *Bairaqs*. Each Bairaq was under the command of a *Jamadar*. The permanent *sibandis* were mostly Arabs.[536] In 1758 when the Cambay Chief was asked to enlist some Arabs as soldiers for Surat factory, the English found their demands 'very unreasonable'. The Cambay chief was ordered to discharge these soldiers in the most frugal manner and

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535 *Mirat*, P.430.

536 *MD III* Lt. 34, 74, 143, 193, 196, 202, 207 & 233, in *HOB*, P. 134.

employ some native soldiers in their stead.[537] A year earlier Surat chief complained to Bombay regarding the importance given by the Nawabs of Surat, Cambay and the Marathas to 'all sorts of people who are in the least acquainted with the use of arms' which made those soldiers enhance their prices and the English could hardly recruit any with their price.[538] Another English traveller, an English officer in early 19th Century makes a fleeting remark that the Arabs have established their influence throughout Kathiawad and Kutch.[539] When the British attempted to establish their hegemony in Gujarat the most formidable opposition came from the Arab *sibandi*s playing an important part in all the major principalities of Gujarat.

Amongst all the Principalities, perhaps Baroda exhibited the highest concentration of the Arab *Sibandi*s. Let us take a closer look at the configuration of the Gaekwad army. The army consisted of two parts (1) the regular army and (2) the *Sibandis*. The regular army consisted of different *paga*s. *paga* is something like a regiment with a *pagadar* as its head. These *paga*s consisted of Maratha soldiers who had followed Pilaji Rao and Damaji Rao and settled down in Gujarat. The *ain'huzurat Paga, huzurat chandi paga* and the *patki paga* were considered to be important and maintained by the government.[540] Other than the Government *paga*s there were *Silahdar*s who had their own *Paga*s maintained by different nobles.[541]

537 *GOB I*, P. 126.
538 Ibid. P.115.
539 Suresh Chandra, op.cit, P.64.
540 *Baroda State Gazetteer*, P.635.
541 Ibid. P.636.

The second category of the Baroda army included the *Sibandis*. This section consisted of mercenaries from various ethnic groups, Chief among them being the Arabs and the Sindhis. The Arabs came to be employed regularly and on a large scale during the reign of Fatehsing Rao and Govind Rao increased their numbers. The Arabs in Baroda mainly consisted of two groups divided on the basis of the tribes to which they belonged viz., Yafees and the Harthees. Besides these there existed a variety of inferior and independent chieftains.[542] On the eve of the establishment of British hegemony at Baroda there were 7,ooo Arab *sibandis*, horse and foot in Baroda town and 6,000 horse and 4000 foot with Babaji[543]. They were under the command of four principal Jamadars - sultan Jaffir and Yahya Bin Ahmad belonging to the Yafees tribe and Mohammad Mazkur and Mohammad Abud belonging to the Harthees group. The yafees were considered to be mild in temperament while the Harthees were aggressive.

With the death of Govind Rao Gaekwad and the imprisonment of Kanhoji Rao,[544] the Arab *sibandis* became very powerful in the kingdom. They made Raoji Appaji (Raoba) *diwan*, increased the number of *sibandis* under their command and took control of the town-gates and fortifications in all important towns of the chieftaincy. They also kept the charge of Kanhoji Rao as a check on Raoba. The chieftains during this period did not pay the *Sibandis* directly. Their

542 *GOB V*, P.149.

543 Babaji was the brother of Raoba and the mulkgiri commander of Baroda army.

544 Kanhoji Rao was the regent of Anand Rao Gaekwad, the successor of Govind Rao Gaekwad. The ruler was of a weak disposition. Kanhoji Rao attempted to reduce the number of Arab Sibandis and therefore the Arab Jamadars deposed and imprisoned him. They brought Raoba as diwan who undertook the administration on behalf of the chief.

salaries were discharged by the *shroffs* (bankers). These *shroffs* in turn were farmed the revenues corresponding to the amount of the salaries they defrayed. In fact all the revenues of the Baroda principality were farmed out on one or the other pretext. Thus the whole expenditure of the administration was defrayed by the *shroffs* instead of the rulers. There were mainly five *shroffs* during this time called *potedars* or State financers who defrayed all the expenses of the administration. Amongst these five, two had taken precedence over the others viz., Shamal Parikh and Mangal Das. They were also the *vakils* of the Arab *sibandis* which made their power formidable. The Arab *sibandis* were known to be under the influence of these two *shroffs*.[545] The two *shroffs* interfered much in the administration of the principality as well. The Arabs at Baroda were publicly distinguished as belonging to each of the two *shroffs*.[546]

The rebellion of Malhar Rao of Kadi[547] provided a pretext whereby Raoba brought the British troops into Baroda. The British, on their part, had territorial interests in the region. They were given *chaurasi pargana* and the Gaekwad share of Surat *chauth* by Govind Rao before his death. The Raoba administration was delaying its cession under some pretext. The British decided to support Raoba upon receiving the above mentioned territories. The British were

545 *GOB V*, Pp. 164 & 167.

546 *GOB IV*, P.167.

547 MalharRao of Kadi was called as the Jagirdar of Kadi, a parallel line of the Gaekwads but subordinate to Baroda. Kadi was a district in North Gujarat which was given as Jagir by DamajiRao Gaekwad to KhandeRao Gaekwad, his brother. The Jagirdar was liable to pay a tribute Nazrana to the Gaekwad chief of Baroda. Because of the usurpation of regency by Raoba and Kanhoji's imprisonment MalharRao refused to give Nazrana due for three successive years and also raised disturbances in the northern districts of the Gaekwads. This episode is referred to as Kadi rebellion in the British sources.

approached by both parties, Kanhoji Rao and Raoba, but the British choose to support Raoba upon considering the weak disposition of the chief and the amount of dependence the *diwan* would always have on the English to secure his own position.[548] Raoba and the Bombay President also secretly agreed to reduce the strength of the Arabs after dealing with Malhar Rao. Initially the English tried to allay the apprehensions of the Arab *sibandi*s through 'Idrussi syed, the religious head of the Arab *sibandi*s in Gujarat who had considerable influence with them.[549]

Upon his arrival, Alexander Walker, the first British resident at Baroda, found that the expenses of maintaining the Arab *sibandi*s were Rs. 36 lakhs. He further observed that to establish complete British hegemony the Arabs were the only 'material obstacle' and advised that they should not only be reduced but completely discharged.[550] With the end of the Kadi war in may 1802, the exercise of discharging the Arabs was begun. The reduction of the Arabs took place in two phases in which the Company advanced 15 lakhs in the first phase and 6 lakhs in the second phase to the Gaekwad administration as it was unable to collect the required amount to pay the outstanding salaries of the *sibandi*s. Walker also induced the local *shroff*s to advance Rs. 5 lakhs in the first phase and Rs. 6 lakhs in the second phase on the security of the Company towards the same objective.

548 *GOB IV*, P.104.
549 Ibid. Pp. 18-19.
550 Ibid. P.169; *GOB V*, P.185.

While this was in process, Walker also demanded to be handed over the charge of all city-gates in the control of the Arab *Jamadar*s as well as the charge of Kanhoji Rao to the British residency. This alarmed the *sibandi*s who perceived a threat to their power. They subsequently confined Anand Rao, the Gaekwad chief in his *darbar* and released Kanhoji Rao. Three of the Arab *Jamadar*s, Yahya, Abud and Jafar also refused to hand over the charge of the city-gates, despite receiving their discharge. AnandRao was being confined more severely since 29th Nov, 1802 and the *sibandi*s in other towns also were creating disturbance. Thus, the British began armed action and attacked Lehripura gate[551] where all the Arabs had gathered to fight the British. The *Jamadar*s realized their end and agreed to Walker's terms. The British troops took control of the fort and the chief was set free. An agreement was reached with the Arabs on 28th December, 1802, whereby they were required to (1) avoid all contacts with the domestic enemies of the Gaekwads; (2) Leave Gujarat upon receiving their outstanding salaries and (3) Surrender the control of all city-gates under their charge to the Britsh troops. By the middle of January 1803 all Arab Jamadars, except a few that were retained, left Gujarat. Only Abud did not comply by the agreement and later joined Kanhoji Rao. Since then the Arab *sibandi*s ceased to be important at Baroda.

Subsequently, in 1809 we find the British authorities wanting to disband the remaining number of Arabs from Baroda in what was termed as the 'reforms' at Baroda. Major Walker was against it and the reason in his own words was: *"they are undoubtedly the best*

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551 *GOB V*, Pp. 202 & 179.

infantry in the service, and a few of them are probably necessary to give some degree of respectable efficiency to that part of the Gaekwad establishment where actual service may be expected, particularly in Kathiawad where also from their dispersed among the different chieftains of the country they are considerable use as mediators. There will however be no occasion to encourage their employment and without discovering any perceptible wish for the discharge of the few who are no longer formidable, they will be found gradually to disappear from the service".[552]

At Nawanagar,[553] Jam Jasaji, the chief of Nawanagar was unhappy with the imposition of British over lordship and being subject to British arbitration in disputes with Kutch. He resisted these attempts by the British and refused to acknowledge the security for revenue settlements given earlier to Alexander Walker. The Arab *sibandis* in Jam's service also were antagonistic of the British. The confrontation of the British with the *sibandis* of Jam took place in two incidents. This kind of animosity between the British soldiers and the Arabs was seen first in case of Baroda. While the Kadi episode was in progression two incidents took place where an Arab soldier killed an English officer.[554] By this time this animosity seems to have increased. Here an English officer was attacked near Murpur, a fort in Nawanagar, by some Arab soldiers guarding the fort.[555] The fort had around 250 Arabs. Even after repeated complaints the Jam refused to hand over the said Arabs. While things were in this situation the Jam

552 *GOB VIII*, Pp.186-187.
553 A major principality in the North of Saurashtra.
554 *GOB V*, Pp. 159-160.
555 *GOB VIII*, Pp. 398-399.

attempted to take the bond of *fail Zamini* undertaken on his behalf by one Naji, an Arab Jamadar of some importance. Naji stood security towards its performance by the Jam and in return received the charge of one of the gates through British influence.[556] The Jam now forced Naji to give away the bond to him as that would destroy the evidence of the Jam having undertaken such an agreement in the first place. The Jamadar refused to comply with the Jam's orders since he believed it not in accord with the Arab's character to back on a Security given and lessen his consequence with the British and the Gaekwads.[557] Raghunathji, the *diwan* of Junagadh, who also had considerable influence at Nawanagar, mediated and settled the issue, but it proved to be temporary. With the renewal of dissensions with the British the Jam again asked the same thing of Naji. Thus, Naji left Jam's service and went to Dhrol on the advice of James.Carnac.[558] In the armed struggle that followed the Jam could not compete with the superior strength of the British and accepted their authority. Then the British asked the Jam to discharge the Arabs, the Sindhis, Makranis and other foreign *sibandis* in his employment.[559] He was allowed only to keep 300 *chela* or Arab bodyguards.[560] The British also took over the port of Sayla from the Jam. Around about the same time another such incident took place at Phelan where a Sindhi *sibandi* attacked another of the English officers. It was later found that the Jam was not a party to the incident and the Sindhi was not a regular part of his army. The *sibandi escaped* and the British did not pursue the matter

556 Ibid. P.431.
557 Ibid.
558 Ibid. P.446.
559 *GOB VIII*, P.452.
560 Ibid. P.462.

further.[561] In the final settlement with the joint Gaekwad-British *sarkar* the Jam requested to keep in his employment 20 baracks consisting of 10 to 12 Arabs and others Hindustanis in each barrack to administer his extensive dominions.[562] It was granted by the English on the condition that the Gaekwad chief shall be authorized to monitor the troops and in case of the sibandis being not required they would discharge them.[563] This agreement took place in 1812.

In case of Junagadh the British had to confront the Sindhi *sibandis* before they could establish complete hegemony. In 1811 Bahadur Khan Nawab died leading to a succession struggle. On the one side was an alleged 'spurious'[564] son of the Nawab who was supported by the Amarji family. Raghunathji was the *diwan* but has lost all his influence in the *darbar*. He had the support of some inferior Arab *jamadars*. On the other hand was the illegitimate son of the deceased Nawab and the accepted heir. He ascended the throne with the title of Bahadur Khan II. It seems that illegitimacy was not an impediment to sovereignty in case of Junagadh.[565] He had the support of an important Arab Jamadar Umar Mukhasan who had Sindhi following. Immediately, Jamadar Umar Mukhasan took charge of all the forts of Junagadh chieftaincy and employed 10 to 15 thousand

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561 Ibid. Pp. 477-478.

562 Ibid. P.482.

563 Ibid. P.483.

564 Bahadur Khan II who eventually succeded to the *masnad* of Junagadh was not alegitimate son of the deceased Nawab Hamid Khan. On the other hand the supposed legitimate son was found not to have been born to the Nawab in the Nawab's lifetime itself, therefore his pretensions to the *masnad* were set aside. GOB VIII, Junagdh Succession issue, Pp. 332-336.

565 *GOB VIII*, P. 341. Illegitimacy was not a problem because of established practice of illegitimate offspring succeeding to the masnad in case of no legitimate offspring being there.

new *sibandis*. Both parties turned to the Gaekwad to decide the issue of succession.

Subsequently, James Carnac, the Resident of Baroda, observed that the *mahals* and towns were being managed by the Sindhi *sibandis*.[566] The British policy found it imperative to dispossess the Sindhis of power, since their being in power would deprive the Nawab of his 'rightful' authority.[567] Although we are not informed as to the precise way in which this was done, but by 1814 the Sindhis were dispossessed of the control of the forts and lands they held as security to the payment of their arrears of salaries. The forts of Bucor and Mewar held by *Jamadars* Umardura Sindhi and Mohammad Umar Arab was handed over to the Government of Junagadh without any struggle. Similar negotiations were being carried on for the surrender of forts of Una and Delwada. Their arrears were settled in a similar way as that of the Baroda *Sibandis* and were discharged.[568] In 1814-15 Jamadar Umar Mukhasan was dispossessed of his position in the *darbar* allegedly as he attempted to harm to the Nawab and was expelled from the town of Junagadh.[569] Thus, the British eliminated another powerful section of the non-British soldiers and their hegemony was complete in Junagadh as well.

However following these developments a last attempt was made by the Arabs to undermine the British authority with the support of Triambak Rao Danglia, the Peshwa's *sarsubah*. In 1814 Peshwa

566 *GOB VIII*, Pp. 346-347.
567 Ibid. P. 347.
568 Ibid. Pp. 348-349.
569 *Statistical account of Junagadh*, op.cit., Pp.54-55.

refused to give *ijara* of his share of revenues in Gujarat as done earlier to the Gaekwads and sent his own *sarsubah.* However a tacit agreement was reached to the effect that the English would collect the revenues from Saurashtra and North Gujarat on behalf of the Peshwa, as settled in the revenue settlement agreements. It was also proposed that the *Sarsubah* should not intervene in the affairs of Saurashtra. The exact terms and conditions were still under negotiations. Danglia who was a staunch opponent of the English, attempted to stop the British from accruing the benefits of the revenue settlements. In 1814 the Jam Jasaji of Nawanagar died and was succeeded by his son. He was antagonist of the British authority in his kingdom. Danglia befriended the Jam. The Arab Jamadars who were discharged from the various principalities were also given service by Danglia. This came to the notice of the British officers through certain letters intercepted by them. He induced the Masqati Arabs in the Peninsula to rebel against the British aggression.[570] The Arabs guarding the towns of Hariana, Kondorna and Pardhari forts in Saurashtra rebelled. The British undertook armed action against them and expelled them. They later took refuge in Jodiya bandar. Jodiya was being governed by the descendants of Mehraman Khawas,[571] who also enlisted a large number of Arabs discharged by Husain Mian of Cutch.[572] The chief of Wankaner also joined in this league against the British and ousted the Gaekwad officers in his principality. He further enlisted a number of Arabs and declared war against the Gaekwad.[573] Danglia directed his

570 *GOB IX,* P. 111.
571 Mehraman Khawas was the *diwan* of Jamanagar and enjoyed much influence there.
572 *GOB IX,* Pp. 110-111.
573 Ibid. P. 111.

adherents to collect all Musqatis.[574] Even in July 1815 the Masqatis were encamped at Jodiya and the British were contemplating attack on that area.[575] Nothing however seems to have resulted from these preparations as Danglia was recalled to Poona by the Peshwa and soon got involved in the controversial murder of Gangadhar Shastri. Our documentation does not provide any further information as to how the British dealt with this situation. But it could be conjectured that large number of them, if not the whole, must have been discharged.

A general idea of the British policy towards these powerful foreign *sibandis* can be had from certain observations made by the British officers. During the second Anglo-Maratha war (1803) General Wellesley advised Alexander Walker, to employ *Sibandis* in his establishment. This was for two reasons. In the territories belonging to the Marathas there were many groups of people whose only mode of subsistence was military service. With the establishment of the British rule in various parts of Peshwa's dominions these people were left with no other option but that of plundering as rebels or seeking employment in other principalities who were the enemies of the British. With their local knowledge they could prove to be dangerous enemies. Secondly, the regular disciplined British troops were needed in the war against the Marathas. Replacing them with the *sibandis* for the mundane services would save expenses for the

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574 Ibid. Pp. 45-46.

575 Ibid. P.122. Also *HSBSR IV,* Lt. 82, P. 727. VithalRao Devaji, Gaekwad Sarsubah of Kathiawad, informs AnandRao Gaekwad about the quelling of the rebellion by the Masqatis by the English forces.

Company.[576] Immediate to disbanding the Arab *Sibandis* and replacing them with the British battalions, Major Walker was of the opinion that the British should *'disgust them (the Gaekwads) with their own troops or render them useless and contemptible'* by providing the military assistance promptly, liberally and extensively on every occasion. He also apprehended that if there was any dissatisfaction on the part of the chiefs they could still employ other sources of military help viz, the *Sibandis*. In this case the influence of the Company would be endangered.[577] He further says that even if the proposed measure was not fair, it would certainly benefit the British in this region.[578]

SOCIAL ROLE OF THE *SIBANDIS*

It has already been mentioned that the Jamadars especially Arab and Sindhi stood as securities in monetary and non-monetary transactions. Such transactions were between private persons as well as between the government and the people and at times between two principalities. The Arab Jamadars, not only of Baroda but also of other chieftaincies, several times stood security safeguarding the interests of the private parties in transactions with the government. First mention of a Jamadar standing security to enforce an agreement

576 *GOB VI*, Pp. 158-159.
577 Ibid, P.163.
578 Ibid.

is made in connection of one Ghulam Husain Khan who got the post of Qazi at Ahmedabad on the payment of Rs. 2000 to Momin Khan II in 1756-57. He got the document attested by Mohammad Hashim Bakshi and Mohammad Lal Rohilla Jamadar.[579] At Baroda a *sanad* was granted by Anand Rao Gaekwad to shankerji bin Sunderji, *desai* of *pargana* Balesar on 27th April, 1801, granting the *desaigiri* rights to him, the *zamin* was given by Yahya (Huya) ben Nasir Jamadar, Umaid ben Hamid, Mohammad Abud Jamadar and Sultan Jafar all four Principal Jamadars of Baroda.[580] In the battle with Malhar Rao a group of Sikh *Sibandis* requested employment with the Baroda army. They were taken into Babaji's service on Arab Jamadars' security.[581] In 1802 a parwana dated 7th August was given to the Nawab of Cambay by AnandRao Gaekwad assuring the Nawab that no Gaekwad troops will invade his territories on account of the Gaekwad claim of Ghasdana. This parwana was signed by Arab Jamadars Mubarak Ben Said and Mohammad Abud.[582] At Bharuch the documents of securities given by Bharuch Nawabs was counter signed by the Arab and Qasbati Jamadars as witnesses.[583] Similarly the Arab Jamadars of Junagadh also stood securities ensuring timely payment of salaries.[584] Jamadar Umar Mukhasan stood security to an amount of money to be paid by the Nawab of Junagadh to the *shroffs* of the Gaekwad army.[585] He also undertook to secure the provisions made for Bibi Kamal Bakht, wife of Nawab Hamid Khan of Junagadh for

579 *Mirat*, Pp.811-812.
580 *Aitchison, Vol-VI*, op.cit., P.335.
581 *GOB IV*, P.198.
582 *GOB VIII*, P. 494.
583 *MD III Lt.*196 in *HOB*, P. 134.
584 *Tarikh-i-Sorath*, P.187.
585 *GOB VIII*, P.342.

her maintenance.[586] In the agreement concluded between the Amarji family and Nawab Mahabat Khan of Junagadh the Sindhi and Arab Jamadars stood security to see its terms fulfilled.[587] Similarly in 1802 Fatehsing Rao II, a younger brother of Anand Rao, who had left Baroda due to some problem earlier, was invited to come back. He was promised safety and the office of regent which agreement had the security of seven Arab Jamadars.[588] It was this role at the social level that gave a certain degree of power to the Jamadars to dictate terms to the rulers and thereby augment their importance. It also reflects the amount of trust vested in these Jamadars and their ability to enforce the stipulated terms of a transaction. These conditions contributed towards making the *Sibandis* an important power group in the region.

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586 Ibid. P.342.
587 *Tarikh-i-Sorath*, P.175.
588 *HSBSR IV*, Lt. 52, P. 509.

CONCLUSION

The decline of the Mughal authority in the Subah of Gujarat had begun in the reign of Aurangzeb itself. The principles on which the stability of the Mughal Empire rested were compromised to a large extent during the latter half of the 17th century. The Mughal policy of not combining Jagirdari and Faujdari rights in the same person was compromised to a great extent. Many instances of Faujdars being given charge of their own Jagir have come to our notice. Many administrative lapses could not be checked effectively. In addition, Shivaji's attack and sack of Surat twice had a deep effect on the trade and commerce of Gujarat. Aurangzeb's death only accentuated the problem. The Marathas, who were hovering on the fringes of the region having already conquered the smaller forts of strategic importance, entered the region with full vigour. Factors like the infighting and the power struggle amongst the big nobles added to the process of decline. The ambitions for personal aggrandizement of wealth and power of the nobles appointed as the Nazims and Faujdars of Gujarat led to the creeping in of the malpractices in the administration. This coupled with their inability to check the Maratha invasions led to complete breakdown of the Mughal imperial authority in the region.

The infighting percolated to the level of local nobles as well leading to a situation of constant warfare in the region. Many factions had emerged amongst the regional nobles as well. Mainly two factions that of Shuja'at Khan, protégés of Haider Quli Khan and Hamid Khan, the protégé of Nizam-ul-Mulk, had become prominent by 1725. With the defeat of Shuja'at Khan's faction the semblance of Mughal authority in Gujarat was lost. The region came to be shared half-to-half with the Marathas who had helped Hamid khan against Shuja'at Khan. By 1740 the Subah had disintegrated completely and many principalities of different statures had come into existence.

The most visible characteristic following the decline was the constant flux in the fortunes of almost all the principalities of Gujarat. There was constant warfare amongst these principalities for territorial expansion. In this case the *diwan*s of the various principalities played an important part. The case of Ranchoji Amarji of Junagadh has been explored in this study. Amongst the main beneficiaries of this uncertain situation were the *desai*s and *patel*s. It has been found that the *desai*s could accumulate greater amounts of wealth and power locally. We also see the rise of *ijaradari* simultaneously. It seems that the offices of faujdar, etc were also being given on *ijara*. With the coming of the Marathas *ijara* was institutionalized known as *Kamavisdari*. This institution also helped the *desai*s in their aggrandizement. *Manotidari*, giving monetary sureties for revenue payment by the peasants, also contributed towards the same. The

desais themselves took *ijara* and in places where they were not *Kamavisdars* they became *Manotidars*.

Another notable feature is the increased role of the *bhats* and *charans* in the newly emergent political set-up as security holders or guarantors. Following the decline of effective authority, revenue collection became arbitrary and forceful. The peasants also resisted its payment. Thus, the intervention of the third party became necessary. It was here that the *bhats* acted as intermediaries between the parties for settling the payment issues. Although their role as securities in revenue collection process has come to our notice for earlier times as well, but during our period of investigation their role seems to have been enhanced. The security system pervaded other branches of administration as well. Referred to as *bandheri* in Persian sources and as *bhandari* in the British sources, securities were taken for both monetary transactions safeguarding the share of each party and also for non-monetary activities such as security against harassment by officers, both Mughal and Maratha. By the end of the Century, the British officers found *bandheri* being used in all the activities of Baroda administration. The case seems to have been the same with other principalities as well. The Arab *sibandis* also came to hold the same position as that of the *bhats*. This gave them considerable power over the administration and it was this position, which the British took from the Arab *sibandis* that placed them in a formidable position vis-à-vis the local administration.

The above developments took place in the back drop of acute fragmentation of political authority in the region. The existence of multiple authorities frequently led to conflicts and the nature of sovereignty is not easily discernible. The assertion of authority by various factions amongst the Mughals and Marathas created uncertain political conditions. Their authority extended only to the urban areas; rural areas were largely left to fend for themselves. The *Girassia*s were beneficiaries under such a situation. They could extend their claim to revenues over many villages and recourse to force for its realization. These conditions also gave rise to new practices in the assertion of political authority. *Mulkgiri* was one such practice. Many principalities undertook *Mulkgiri* expeditions for collecting tribute from the subordinate principalities. This practice has been explained in detail in the fourth chapter. We also come across the practice of seeking protection by smaller principalities from the bigger ones. This practice helped many petty principalities save itself from extinction. Many individuals also frequently sought protection from other political powers against official harassment. Due to the rise and existence of multiple authorities the offices of *Peshkar* and *Vakil* and such other intermediaries became important.

The study of the folk literature available in the form of *garba*s reflects the different concerns of the common people. It mainly reflects the concern of the people with the Maratha invasions early in the century and the lack of imperial protection to them. Later, the harassment of the subjects by the Peshwa's *Sarsubahdar*s forms the subject of this literature. This harassment led the *Nagarsheth*s and

merchants to act as protectors of local population against harassment by officials. Consequently, the *nagarseth*s rose in social esteem and became the voice in their localities that had to be heard by the administration.

One of the major changes of 18th century Gujarat, as in the rest of India, is the rise of mercenary system of army. In Gujarat we can see the mercenaries called sibandis being assigned important functions like safeguarding towns and fortifications and undertaking *Mulkgiri* expeditions. These sibandis were organized on ethnic basis. We see sibandis from diverse ethnic background being active in the region but the *Arabs* and the *Sindhi*s after them were the most sought after. They also emerged as a power group in different principalities. It was these *Arab* and *Sindhi* sibandis that the British had to confront while they were establishing their hegemony in the region. The British disbanded the *Arabs* in large numbers once they came to power. Besides the non-indigenous sibandis the indigenous groups of sibandis known as *Qasbati*s were also employed. But it is clear that the non-indigenous sibandis were more in demand mainly due to their mobility and non-attachment to lands. The *Qasbati*s were local soldiers leading one to suggest that they were indeed peasants who were attached to their lands and therefore unwilling to move from their local areas.

This period also saw the rise of British East India Company as a sovereign authority. Using its position as a merchant body in the economy of Surat the Company could capture Surat's castle in 1759, its first conquest in Gujarat and monopolize Surat's trade to a great

extent. This was followed by the conquest of Bharuch. It was an outright territorial conquest and was planned in advance with a view of territorial aggrandizement. The Bombay Presidency's attempts at conquest of Gujarat was aborted in 1781 due to the failure of first Anglo-Maratha war but 20 years later due to their intervention in the internal crisis of Baroda they could establish subsidiary alliance with Baroda principality. Through Baroda's over lordship over the rest of the principalities in Gujarat the Company could penetrate into the interiors. The Company used revenue settlements or fixing of tribute to be paid to the Gaekwads and the Peshwa by these principalities, as an instrument towards establishing their presence in Saurashtra and the Mewasi regions of North Gujarat. In 1818 due to Peshwa's defeat in the third Anglo-Maratha war the British became paramount authority in Gujarat.

Though this study is not directly concerned with the economic aspects of the period there are indications in the sources that the economy of Gujarat was indeed prospering as suggested by many recent studies. Infact the invasions, constant warfare and uncertain political conditions do not seem to have affected the economy of the region adversely. There were many temporary halts and disturbances in trade and commercial activity all through the Century, but at the same time the merchants and rulers adopted different mechanisms to overcome the crisis and continue the trade. The urban revenues were mainly dependant on the trade and commerce of the place and the new rulers being in utmost need of the revenues always made compromises with the merchants in case of any disturbances. Therefore trade and

commerce continued to be undertaken even if it was not smooth at all times. The wealth with the *desai*s and their taking of *ijara* indicates that agricultural production was high and was the main means of their wealth creation. They made *ijara* an instrument of further wealth creation. Another important fact worth noticing is that the non-indigenous *sibandi*s used to come to the region in search of employment and were employed in large numbers. They could also secure a position whereby they played an important part in the power politics of different principalities. Their main aim was to save the salaries and return home after some years. The region was a major market for the military labour. These factors indicate that during this period the region was dynamic, to say the least. These issues can be taken up by the students of 18th century Gujarat's history for further research that would lead to greater understanding of the period and the region.

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